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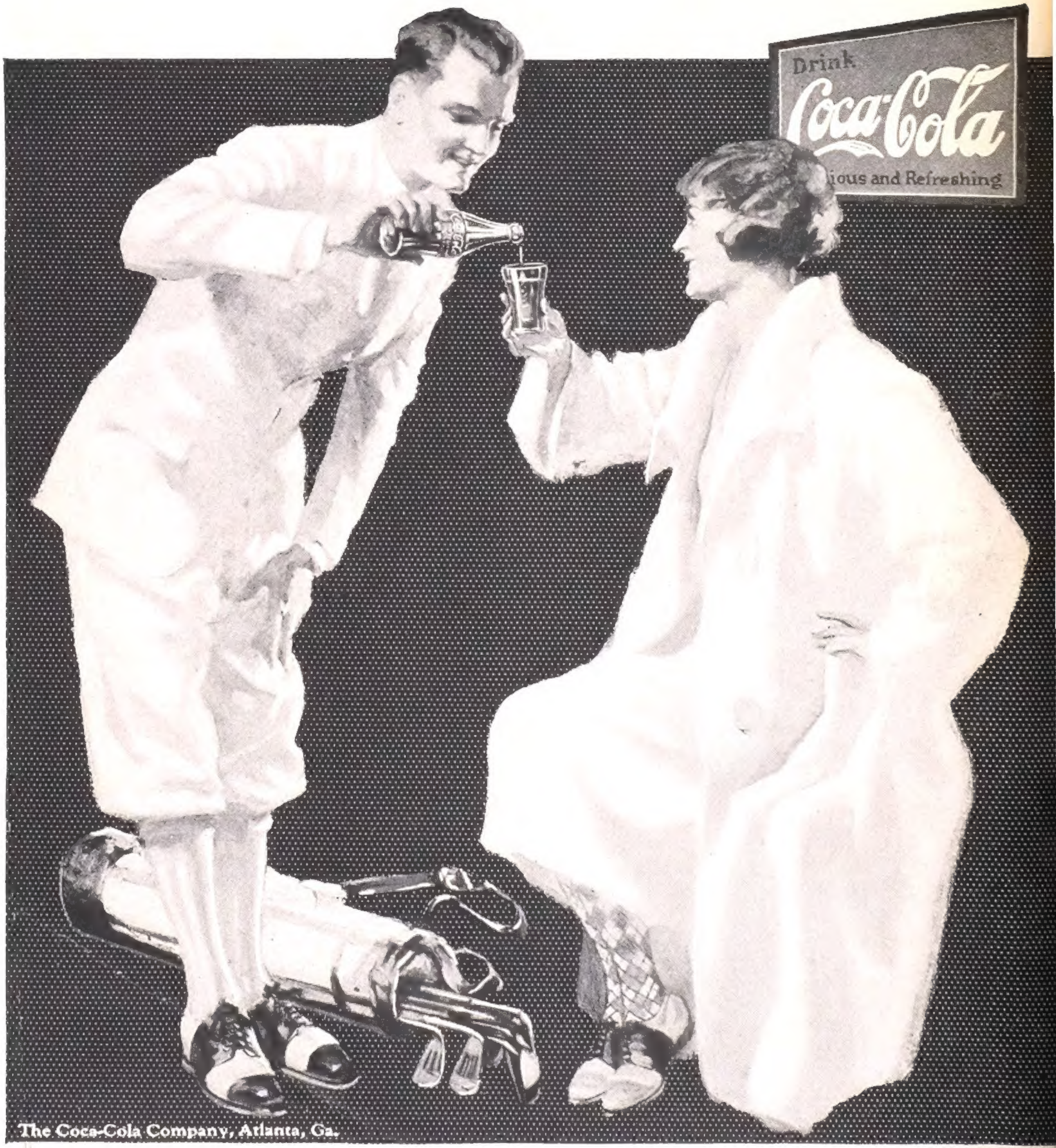
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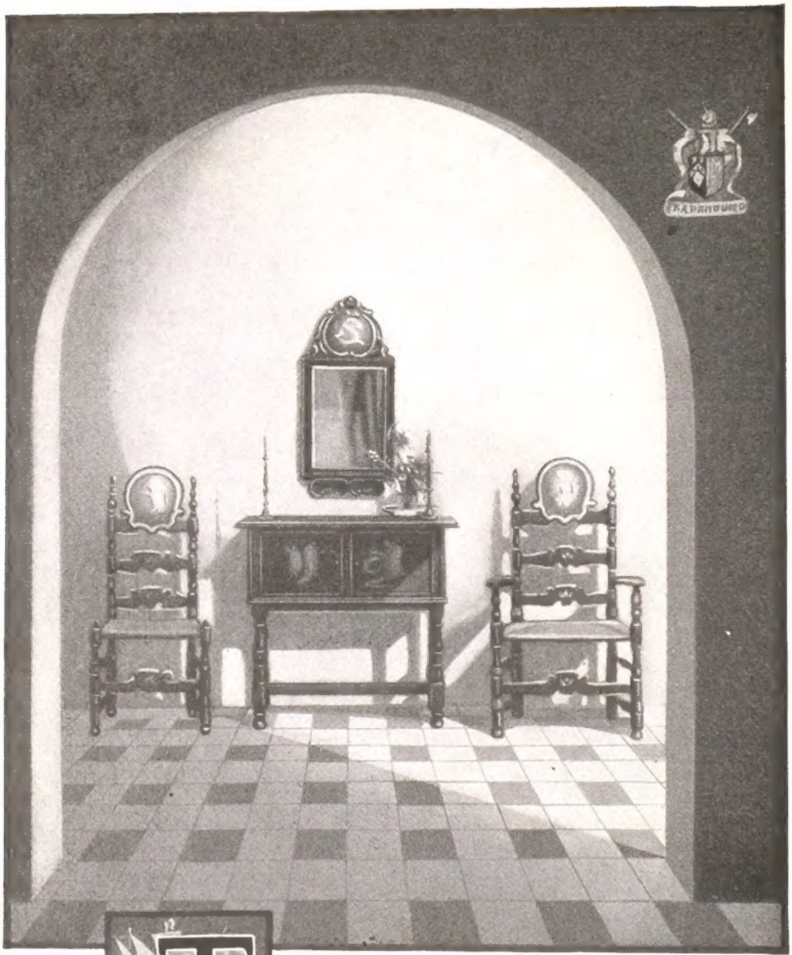

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Printed by The Schweinler Press, New York, N. Y. U. S. A.

VOLUME I
Number 4

APRIL
1925

THE GOLDEN BOOK MAGAZINE

OF FICTION AND TRUE STORIES THAT WILL LIVE

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The following table of contents from the January number indicates the scope of subjects.

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THE MURREN CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER, 1924

Presidential Address; An Apostolate and an Evangel — *Sir Henry Lunn, M.A., M.D.*

OUR COMMON EVANGEL

Its basis, unity and many sidedness in Jesus Christ, by Bishop Talbot, The Bishop of Chelmford, and The Rev. P. Carnegie Simpson, D.D.
The Evangel and the "Apostles' Doctrine," by Archbishop Bernard, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, and The Rev. Professor G. S. Duncan, B.D.
The Evangel and "The Fellowship," by The Rev. Charles Brown, D.D., and The Rev. Canon T. A. Lacey.
The Evangel and "The Breaking of Bread," by The Bishop of Plymouth and The Rev. F. Platt, D.D.
The Evangel and "The Prayers," by The Rev. Thomas Phillips, B.A. and The Bishop of Edinburgh.
The Evangel and the Individual Soul, by Dr. T. R. Glover, The Rev. Francis Underhill.
The Evangel and the Conduct of Life, by The Bishop of Winchester and The Rev. W. F. Lofthouse, D.D.
The Evangel and Humanism, by The Rev. John A. Hutton, D.D. and The Rev. Canon J. G. Simpson.
The Evangel and World Evangelization, by The Bishop of Peterborough and The Rev. W. Y. Fullerton.
The Evangel and Historical Criticism, by The Rev. James Moffat, D.D., D.Litt., and The Rev. A. E. J. Rawlinson.
Unity and the Evangel, by Archbishop Bernard and The Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, D.D.
The Evangel and Modern Psychology, by The Rev. P. N. Waggett, S.S.J.E., and The Rev. Wm. C. Poole, Ph.D.
The Conference of Life and Work, Stockholm, 1925, by The Archbishop of Upsala.
New Testament Research, by Professor Adolph Deissmann, D.Theol., D.D.
The Tercentenary of George Fox, by Mrs. George Cadbury.
Two New Aspects of the Life of St. Francis of Assisi, by Professor Paul Sabatier.
Book Notices, Pronouncements of the Quarter, etc.

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Some Persons of Importance

BACK in the nineties there were two magazines whose arrival always aroused a lively emotion, as of pleasure beckoning close at hand—perhaps, from what I hear, somewhat like having an imminent appointment with a charming lady, or knowing that one's bank account is a trifle more than adequate for the unique old maple New England wine-chest one has just discovered.

First, since it came weekly, the London *Saturday Review*. Here one knew that, for the turning of a page, George Bernard Shaw and Max Beerbohm and J. F. Runciman and such sloggers and swordsmen would arouse one's innermost springs of humour, and give even a cloddish workaday mind the pleasant illusion that it was boldly traversing untrodden paths of thought and feeling in regard to books, music, art and life. "There were giants in those days." And then *Blackwood's*, that grand old "Maga" which celebrated its hundredth anniversary eight years back—where the office toiler might take part in the lively adventures of English colonial administrators, soldiers and explorers, among strange peoples in lands whose very names were romance.

Possibly there were other Americans who joyed in these periodical visitants from across the sea (since I have just discovered that one reader of this magazine still finds Charles Reade a delight, as I do; and another has pounced upon my "obsession" for George Meredith—only to agree instead of criticizing).

* * *

If so, they will doubtless recall how they became accustomed to look for the tales by one Hugh Clifford. Here was a man of power and perspective, clearly writing about things of which he had been a part both physically and mentally—through a rare perceptive sympathy with the picturesque folk he was describing. It was like wandering about a new, strange, fascinating world, with a friendly guide who made the hidden meanings clear.

Some light is thrown on this phenomenon by perusing the record of the author—now Sir Hugh Clifford, G. C. M. G., Governor and Commander-in-chief of Nigeria.

When he was barely of age, "Fate and a rather courageous Colonial-Governor ordained" that he should penetrate an almost unknown land on a special mission to the Sultan of Pahang, then an independent state on the eastern side of the Malay Peninsula.

Clifford secured the desired treaty, went to Pahang himself as Political Agent, and for some twenty years (1883–1903) was the principal factor in binding this changing country to Britain. He camped with the jungle aborigines, he dispensed medicine and justice, and always he was absorbing the human characters and the dramatic actions of the most interesting folk in whose minds he was helping to instil some of the better principles of Western civilization.

His tales are fragments of the writer's interesting life. They stand somewhere in between fiction and true narrative. There is often slight regard for the story as a work of art—just because the actuality is so impressive. Somehow that very quality gives them an additional and individual flavour; a whole background of unknown races and their lives breaks through the lines upon the wondering reader's mind; and there are few imaginations of our time which could heighten the tense thrill of the veritable facts Sir Hugh sets forth.

Moreover, for sheer artistry in words, it would be difficult to surpass such passages as describe the elusive Pi-Noi, Breeze of the Forest, in "The Further Side of Silence" (which we hope to print in a later issue). The present story, "The Lone-Hand Raid of Kûlop Sûmbing," is an epic tale of the adventures of a haughty Malay warrior among the despised inferiors of the jungle, the aboriginal Sakai.

Apparently, only a few of Sir Hugh Clifford's books have been published in America: since 1897, when he issued "Studies in Court and Kampong," there have been at least a dozen in England—besides an invaluable dictionary of the Malay language.

I cannot read a story by Thomas A. Janvier without getting a fresh sense of what a pleasant companion he must have been. Though his personality is never obtruded, it colours everything from his pen: the enthusiastic testimony of his friends is not needed to produce a certainty that an evening's talk with him would always have had zest and flavour. Robert Louis Stevenson has the same quality, in his own way. And as for Meredith—of course that would have been like hearkening to some Olympian, narrating his observations of diverting little man with a friendly smile of cosmic humor.

There is a little gray burro, El Sabio (The Wise One), who is largely the "hero" of Janvier's almost forgotten but exciting romance, "The Aztec Treasure House": the man who could write the descriptions of that companionable ass had something beside which Laurence Sterne's famous apostrophe is but disgusting affectation. (To be sure, Sterne was an artificial humbug in everything except his irresistible allusive humour.) And Janvier's delightful, omnipresent fun always warms and expands the heart.

"The Passing of Thomas" was written about 1899, at just about the middle of Mr. Janvier's literary career, his first book appearing in 1885, and his last shortly after his death in 1913.

◆

The most avid fiction-reader has probably experienced that satiety which comes from a steady diet of "external adventure." One could form a large (and tiresome) library today of those tales where things are happening all the time, but in which the "heroes" could be shifted from volume to volume with as slight confusion as if one exchanged the "illustrations."

There is no vitality, even for purposes of pure entertainment, in a story whose action does not spring inevitably from the human characters involved. And there have been many masterly writers who showed that more interesting and exciting events may take place within a human being than anything which can happen to him from without.

Some admittedly "red-blooded" folk find this point of view reduced to an absurdity in the writings of Henry James; and most of us would have to confess that there are points where his disembodied analyses begin to resemble for us the achievements of the Chinamen who spend lifetimes carving bedsteads. But when the author of the "Two Magics" did condescend a trifle to human materialisms, his subtleties were absorbing and stimulating. And if one considers that James wrote industriously for more than forty years ("Roderick Hudson" appeared in 1875 and "Watch and Ward" had been published in the *Atlantic* four years earlier), pouring out twenty novels, nearly thirty volumes of short stories, and eight or ten volumes of essays and criticisms—any alert mind may feel complete confidence of finding much that belongs to it in this five-foot shelf.

If there was one subject more than another which James made peculiarly his own, it was the essential differences between America and Europe. "Miss Gunton of Poughkeepsie" is a most characteristic and amusing presentation of these opposed outlooks—yet with the underlying human nature closely akin.

◆

Stewart Edward White has averaged something better than a volume a year since his first offerings of "The Westerners" and "The Claim Jumpers" in 1901, and "The Blazed Trail," the following year, which gave him a sure place among the popular contemporaries.

In everything he writes, whether the scene be his native Michigan, or Arizona, or California, or Africa, you sense a vital enthusiasm, and a desire for precise significant facts. Also the kind of personality which would pass with highest honors that revelatory test of companionship on a camping trip. One envies those two friends who, it was announced, started for Africa with him in February—to shoot lions with bows and arrows!

There is something that cuts deep in "The Rawhide." The tragic human crisis which confronts the grim determination of Señor Johnson, who has met and conquered that fierce beast, the desert, when he faces the fiercer beast in himself; and his poor little Estrella's frantic fleeing from these terrors, which are to him but symbols of his conquest—these sound profound notes that one does not forget.

(*Continued on page 8*)

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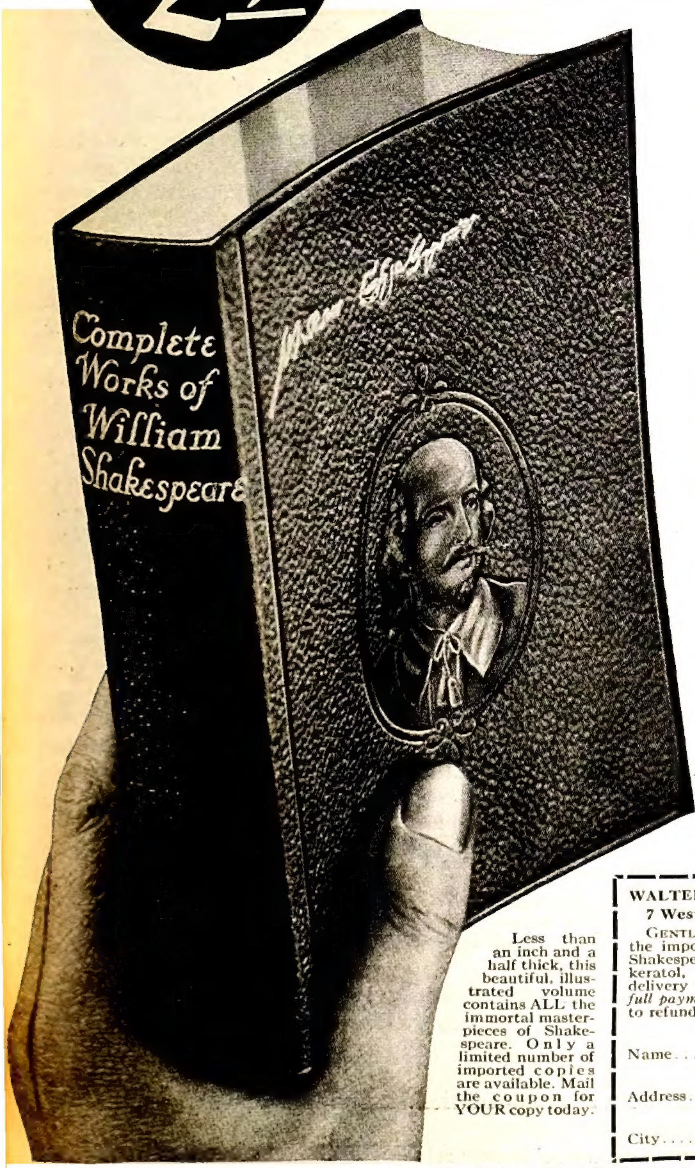

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(*Continued from page 6*)

Louis Charles Alfred de Musset (1810-1857) was playwright, novelist, poet—and a man of rare wit and feeling.

Some "authorities" seem to consider de Musset's "Confession of a Child of the Century" his most significant work. Yet one who knew him only from this dreary and fatigued and artificially-tragic tale would be most agreeably surprised by "The White Blackbird"—to say nothing of a number of other light-hearted tales, and some of his haunting poems with their twilight charm.

"*La Merle Blanc*" is a gay satire of real flavour. Mr. Christopher Morley happened on it by chance, while filling in some hours during his recent European trip; and he was so captivated that he found himself obliged to make a translation—which we are fortunate enough to present here for the first time.

◆

Though Balzac was born in the last year of the eighteenth century, and died in 1850, one needs no readjustment to the past in reading him today. For he was one of the Titans. Prodigious as was the scale of his Human Comedy—the incandescence of human emotion is never lacking when it is called for. It is doubtful if any novelist who ever lived can evoke more veritable intensity of human passions—from religion to miserliness and revenge.

Before he was twenty-five, Balzac had written (with various collaborators) more than thirty volumes of fiction—much of his part being under the pseudonym of "Horace de Saint-Aubin"; but he always considered these 'prentice works unworthy, and would never sign them.

It was not until after publishing "The Chouans" and "The Physiology of Marriage" that he established his reputation, in 1831, by "The Wild Ass's Skin"; and in almost a century the estimate of his greatness has become only wider and deeper.

The formal French bibliography credits him with about 350 entries—and there have been about as many books written about him.

"El Verdugo" (The Executioner) is based on an historical incident, presenting one of those devastating problems of the soul where Balzac was most at home.

◆

Alfred Henry Lewis holds a secure place among the story-tellers who made broad farce of the untamed West. An Ohio lawyer, and city attorney of Cleveland at twenty-one, he spent some years in the frontier towns of the Southwest between 1880 and 1890—the result being the series of Wolfville volumes which delighted all ten years later. Henry Wallace Phillips, O. Henry, and Harry Leon Wilson worked much the same vein a little later on; but "Dan Quinn's" unbridled yarns of the Old Cattleman, and Cherokee Hall, and Faro Nell are still sure-fire hokum. If there never was such a place as Wolfville, so much the worse for Arizona.

◆

Serafin E. Calderon was, of course, two centuries later than the great writer who was the chief figure (along with Lope de Vega) in the golden age of Spanish drama. The author of "An Andalusian Duel" was professor of poetry and rhetoric, just a hundred years ago, at Granada; he made an invaluable collection of old national ballads, many in manuscript, which is now in the National Library at Madrid; and he tried his hand at poetry and novel-writing as well as literary history. His entertaining volume of "Andalusian Scenes" seems to be what will chiefly keep his name alive.

◆

"The Purloined Letter" is one of the few stories, perhaps the only one, in which Poe's nightmare-ridden imagination dealt with everyday matters, in the real world, with no touch of the grotesque or horrible. That in itself would make it notable, considering the best contemporary judgments as to Poe's place in our literature. In addition, Dupin, the unraveller of mysteries, is a lineal ancestor of Lecoq and all the other reasoning detectives of fiction.

But the tale needs no adventitious recommendation: it grasps the interest and holds it throughout.

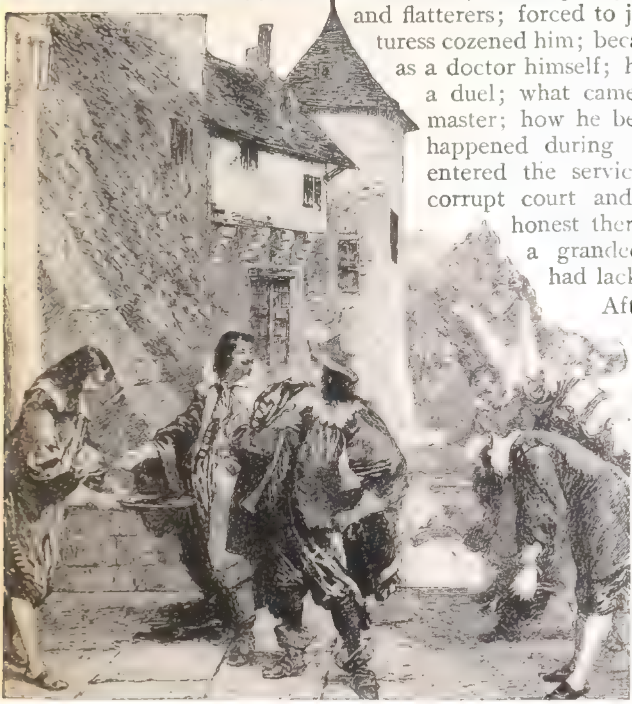
(*Continued on page 10*)

The Gay Life of a Picaroon

Le Sage has the characteristic, which Homer and Shakespeare have, of absolute truth to human nature.
Encyclopædia Britannica.

Rouses our sense of humor as well as keenest interest.
Encycloped.a Americana.

Riding, like D'Artagnan, from a sleepy seventeenth century village, young Gil Blas with forty ducats and a mule, came face to face with life and its temptations. In a wonderful book he tells the story of his many adventures; how he set out to become a student at Salamanca; was taught by bitter experience not to trust innkeepers and flatterers; forced to join a band of robbers; how an adventuress cozened him; became a lackey to a doctor, then practised as a doctor himself; how he sets up for a gallant and fights a duel; what came of writing love-letters for a rakish master; how he became steward to an actress and what happened during his life among stage folk; how he entered the service of an archbishop; tasted life at a corrupt court and learned the disadvantage of being honest there; how he and a young noble duped a grandee; how he rose to high place and had lackeys of his own, but fell again.



After many years of this adventurous picaroon life he rides back to his native village a wiser and better man, still retaining his cheerfulness and good-humored philosophy. And as he rides he thinks over all that has passed—of the meanness, cruelty, and wickedness of himself and others, and thanks God that he has passed through all and arrived at a stage in life when he sincerely repents. Although Gil Blas often saw the seamy side of life, he remains a decent sort of fellow, the story of whose adventures the world has enjoyed for over two centuries. He is

A Lovable Vagabond

who accepts the gift of the gods or the buffets of misfortune with admirable equanimity; and who, when the life of a picaroon ends, is at last truly happy in the midst of a family.

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Le Sage, the genius who wrote this greatest of all novels of adventure, is called the prince of raconteurs by Dr. Saintsbury, Professor of French Literature in Oxford University.

All is easy and good-humored, gay, light, and lively . . . . faults are follies rather than vices.
SIR WALTER SCOTT.

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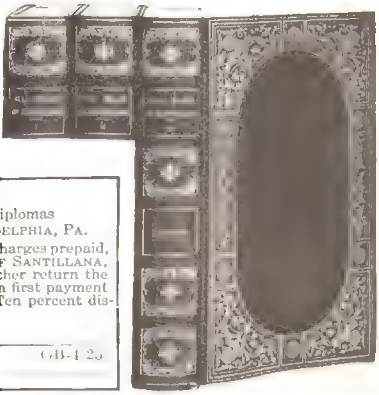

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(*Continued from page 8*)

Alphonse Daudet (1840-1897), like so many writers of genius, began his career with a couple of volumes of poetry, and then spent ten years in writing for the stage, with only moderate success. He then found expression for what he really had to give the world in "Letters from My Mill" and "The Prodigious Adventures of Tartarin of Tarascon"—the first of that long procession of novels, tales and sketches wherein his charming humour and his real sentiment had full swing. It is hardly necessary to say that such a magazine as this will include his work frequently in the future: "The Siege of Berlin," in this number, is one of those touching and dramatic incidents which the author's magic makes one feel must have actually occurred.

* * *

"Wake Robin" (1871) was the first nature book by John Burroughs, though he had published his enthusiastic appreciation of Walt Whitman in 1867—being the first American of any literary reputation to recognize Whitman's genius publicly. It was followed by a score of similar intimate studies of nature close at hand, until he became, long before his death in 1921, one of the chief guides in leading his generation back to these simple joys of the outdoor life about us. "The Bluebird" forms a chapter in that first delightful volume.

* * *

We seem, unwittingly, to have libelled no less a personage than Gaius Julius Cæsar—*the* Cæsar (who traced his own ancestral line, by the way, back to Æneas and Venus).

A friendly critic, who has read and remembered, writes that the great Julius is her favorite hero—and that he never voiced the statement ascribed to him in the February issue: "It is the right of war for conquerors to treat those whom they have conquered according to their pleasure."

Our correspondent is, of course, entirely correct: the emperor-author, in the Gallic Wars, merely repeats this harsh dictum as coming from Ariovistus, who had led a great army of Germans into Gaul, and scornfully informed the Roman general that what was done to the Burgundians was none of his business. Thus does history repeat itself.

Our public apology herewith to the only emperor who ever produced text-books for school children of twenty centuries later.

H. W. L.

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A department offering its services without charge to readers of THE GOLDEN BOOK. All letters to the Bureau are treated as personal and confidential and are answered in full by mail. Below appear a few extracts from recent correspondence relating to subjects of general interest. Address Investment Bureau, THE GOLDEN BOOK, 55 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

THE FINANCIAL DIRECTORY

THE GOLDEN BOOK reserves the following pages for announcements of reputable banking houses, trust companies, savings banks, brokers, and other financial institutions. Inquiry is made concerning the institutions advertising under this heading and none is accepted that is found to be of questionable character. When writing to these institutions please mention THE GOLDEN BOOK.

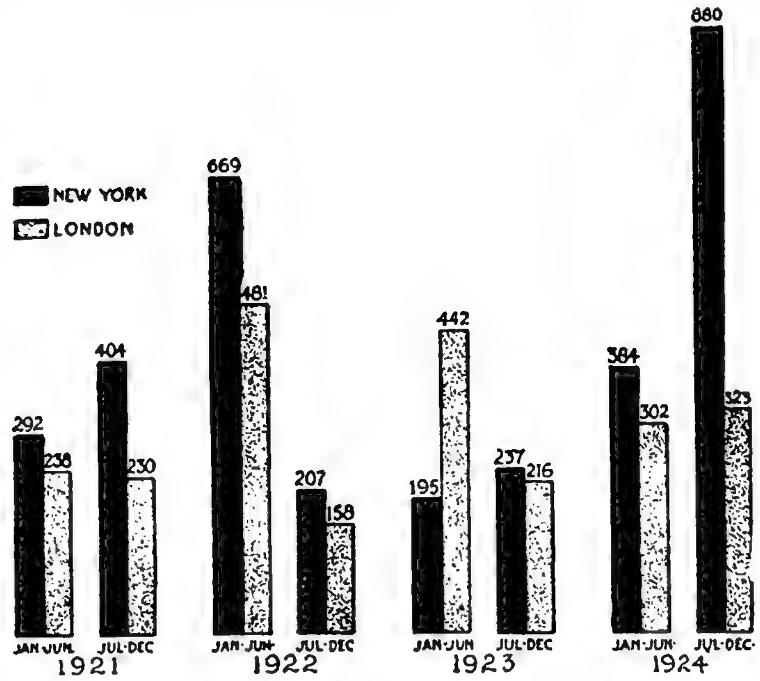
Our Growing Investment Market

By the Investment Editor

Last year there were sold in this country more than six and a quarter billion dollars worth of new securities. Only three-quarters of a billion of these were sold to refund maturing obligations, leaving in excess of five and a half billions of new capital supplied by American investors in one year. In addition to this there was a substantial growth in savings-bank accounts (which have now passed the twenty-one billion dollar mark), in building and loan association investments, and last year a new record was established in the amount of life insurance taken out by forward looking Americans. All this provides a good basis for the continued prosperity of the United States.

If the new capital that went into the purchase of securities had come from every home in the country it would have represented an average investment in that one way of about $250 for each family during the year. As a matter of fact the average individual purchase of securities for the year was probably twenty times that amount, which would lead to the rough deduction that about one-twentieth of the families of the United States bought securities during 1924.

Before the war one would not have thought of making a comparison between the number of investors and the population of the country. Careful estimates made at that time indicated that there were not more than 600,000 bond buyers in the country, probably 400,000 was a closer figure. Then the war, with its Liberty Loan campaigns, started bond buying in nearly every family, and at the end of the war it was estimated that 21,000,000 Americans owned bonds. Opinions differ greatly as to how many still are bond buyers, but the deduction above—that about one-twentieth of the families of the country, or between 1,000,000 and 1,250,000 families, invested in bonds and stocks last year—seems reasonable. Of course, following the educational influence of the Liberty Loan campaigns, the potential field for th
sale of securities is much larger than that.



Par Value of Foreign Capital Issues Offered in New York and London by Six Months Periods in Millions of Dollars. (Pounds Converted at the Current Rates of Exchange.)

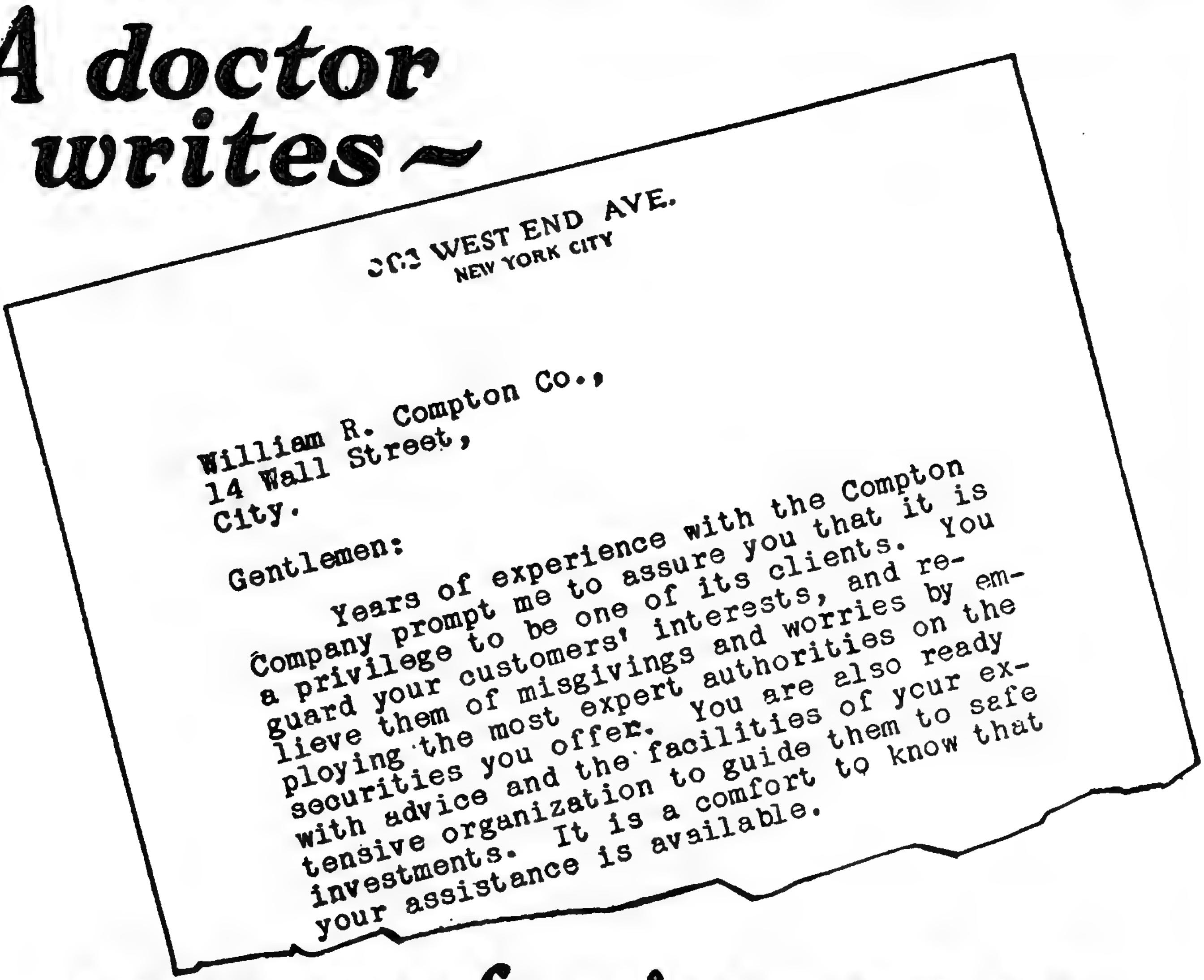
The decline in the unit of sale, while the yearly total o
sales has been steadily mounting, is shown by the records o
every security house. Mr. Dwight W. Morrow, of J. P
Morgan & Co., has gathered specific evidence on that score
He inquired of twenty-thre
representative selling house
which participated in th
placing of two foreign loans
and found that they ha
2,070 customers who bough
bonds of the $25,000,00
Austrian Government loan
and that the average invest
ment was $2,980; that 8,21
customers bought bonds
the $150,000,000 Japanes
loan, and their average i
vestment was $2,680. R
garding this investigation, h
said, "It seems to dispo
very effectively of the ide
that offerings of bonds t
day are taken by large i
stitutions or wealthy ind
viduals."

This average unit of sal
which compares with $10,0
or more before the wa
would have to be still furth
reduced when stocks are ta
en into account, for many
these are now sold in mu
smaller amounts throu
"customer ownership" a
"employee ownership" pla
The average sale of secu
ties to-day is probably
round $2,500. If, then, we assume that investors avera
two purchases in a year, we probably eliminate most of t
duplications, and arrive again at the conclusion that the fi
and a half billion of new capital invested in bonds and stoc
last year was supplied by approximately 1,100,000 investo
This is much lower than some estimates, but on the basis
the evidence it does not seem over-conservative. It in
cates that as yet only one out of every hundred persons in t
country is an investor in securities, and shows the great pos
bilities for the still further spread of investment education

The importance that our investment market has assum

(*Continued on page 14*)

A doctor writes~



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BONDS SHOULD BE KNOWN BY THE COMPANY THEY KEEP

(*Continued from page 12*)

is shown by a comparison with the London market. From the international viewpoint a comparison of the sales of foreign securities here and in London is of the most significance. In only one six-months period since 1920 have the sales of foreign securities in London exceeded those in New York. The chart accompanying this article, reproduced from the *Monthly Review* of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, shows clearly the important part played by our market in this field of foreign financing. In the past four years $3,268,000,000 of foreign issues have been offered here and $2,390,000,000 in London; and last year American investors took $1,264,000,000 such securities while English investors bought only $625,000,000, or less than half as much.

More surprising even than this comparison of foreign investments is the comparison between sales of all securities, here and in England. In 1921 we sold $4,200,000,000 of securities; in England they sold $971,000,000. In 1922 we sold $5,244,000,000; in England they sold $1,000,000,000 In 1923 we sold $5,000,000,000; in England they sold $900, 000,000. Last year we sold $6,300,000,000; they sold $1,000, 000,000. A total of $20,744,000,000 for us in four years against $3,871,000,000 for them.

These figures, particularly those for foreign loans sold here show that American investors are beginning to play thei full part as capitalists of a new creditor nation. From humanitarian and also a selfish viewpoint, we should pla that part; and it is fortunate that we have a greatly aug mented army of investors to help us play it. What the result are likely to be has been well summed up by Secretary Mellor

"The resulting effect should be a growing market f American products and a stimulus to our own industry. Wit the full recovery of Germany and other European countrie it is possible that keener competition may be felt along ce tain lines. This may necessitate some gradual readjustme here, but the general effect will be a more prosperous world

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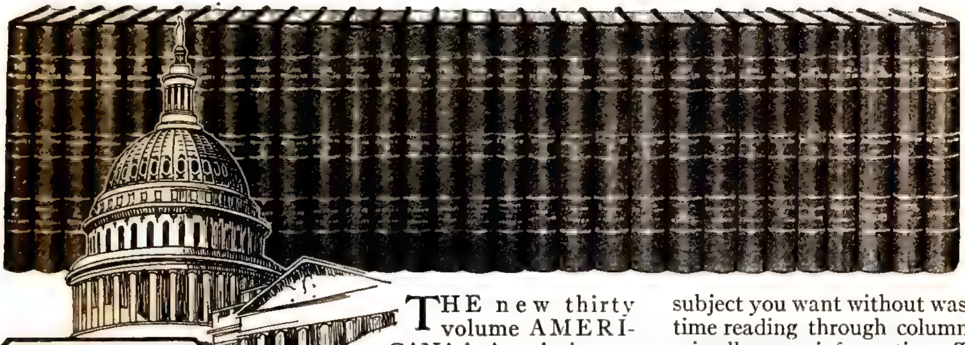

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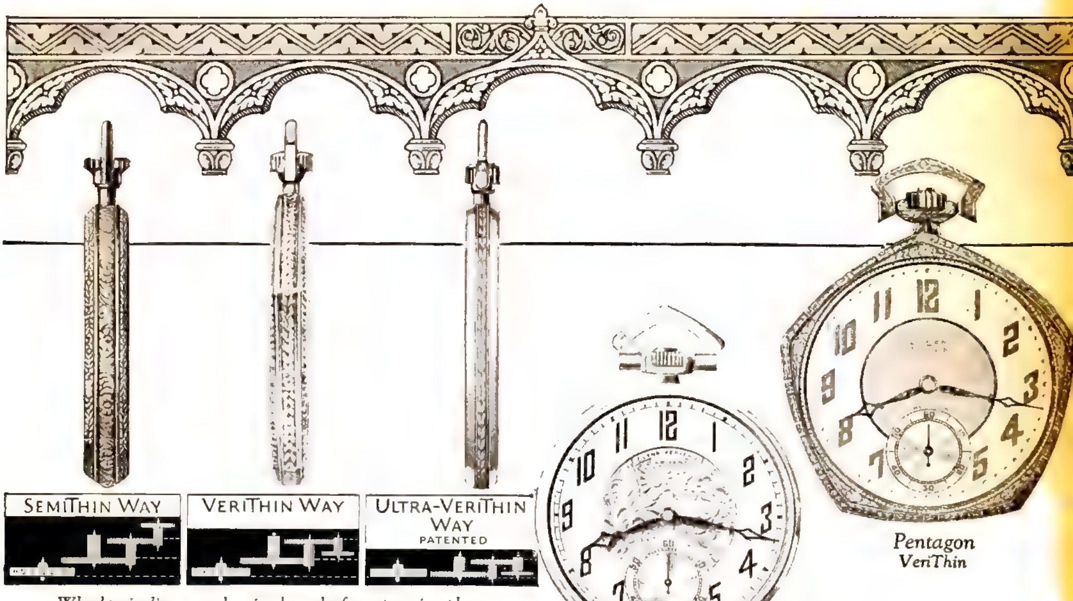

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In nearly every community, the better jewelers can show you the watches pictured here, as well as a variety of other Guild models—their stores are marked by the Gruen Service emblem shown below.

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Pentagon, VeriThin—White or green gold reinforced, engraved, "Precision" movement, $75; 14kt solid green gold, $135; 18kt solid white gold, $165. Can also be had in plain case.

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GRUEN *Guild Watches*

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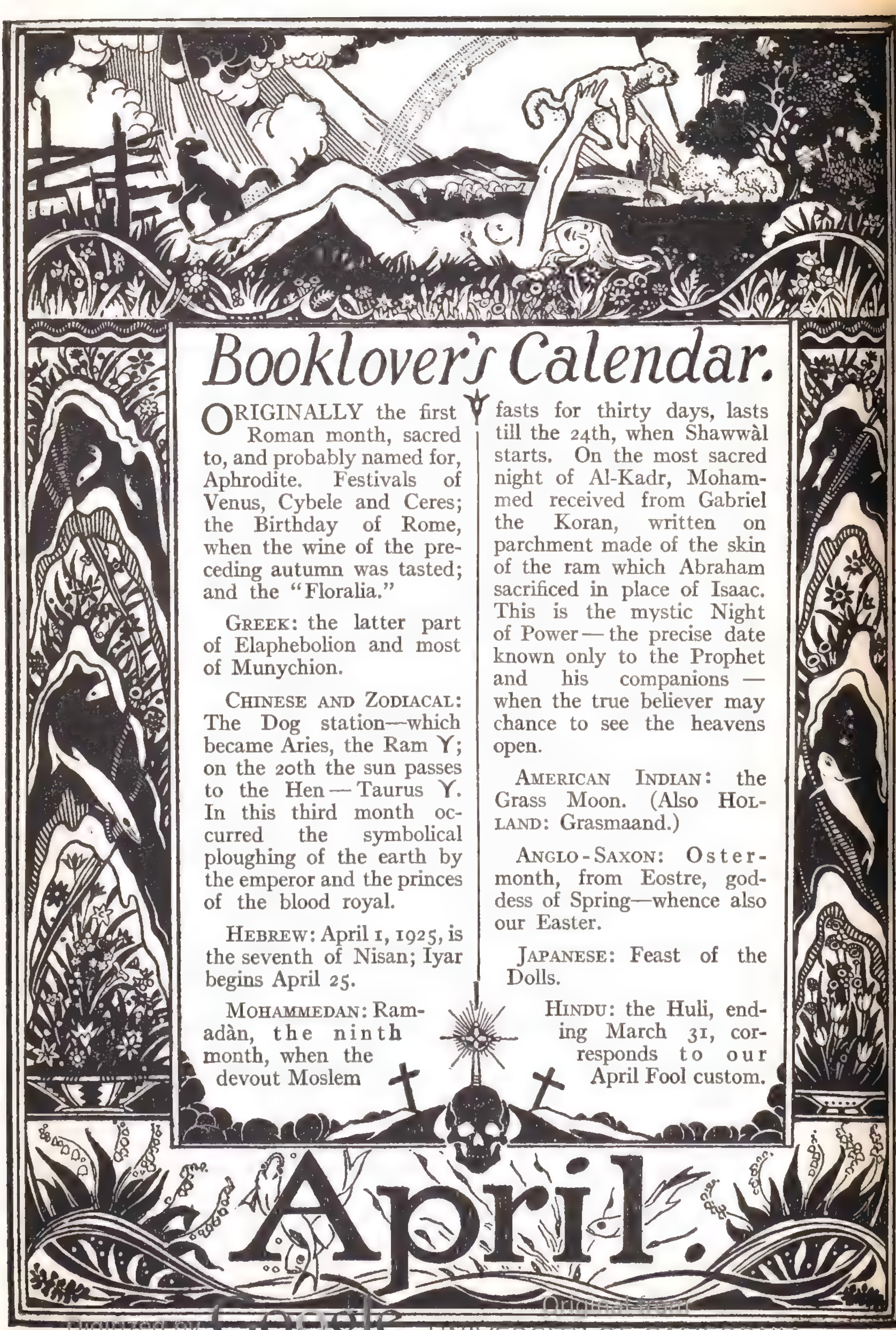
GRUEN

Phrases That Moved Men's Minds

"I am a Roman Citizen" (Cicero, about 70 B. C.)	A proud boast, *Civis Romanus sum*, expressing the personal share in Rome's position as mistress of the world, which every Roman felt.
"We who are about to die salute you" (Gladiators of time of Claudius, about 50 A. D.)	*Ave Imperator, morituri te salutamus!* cried the gladiators passing before the Emperor on their way to the sea-fight he had ordered, to celebrate the completion of a great canal and harbor work.
"Might is right" (Ascribed to Plato, 427-347 B. C.)	Mithridates, Attila, Nietzsche, Bismarck and many another superman openly avowed this principle—on which many, many more have acted.
"Perfidious Albion" (Possibly Philip of Valois (Philip VI) about 1340)	The Frenchman's traditional expression of his inability to comprehend the Englishman, and his distrust of the latter's motives.
"Trust in God but keep your powder dry" (Cromwell, about 1645)	The shrewd Roundhead leader to his men as they were about to cross a river to attack the Royalists.
"Look for the woman" (Gabriel de Sartine, about 1759)	*Cherchez la femme*, a maxim of the famous lieutenant-general of Paris police.
"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" (Antoine-François Momoro, 1789)	The expression of the ideals of the French Revolution, adopted as the motto of the Republic.
"Give me liberty or give me death" (Patrick Henry, 1775)	The fiery speech of the Virginia orator at the Convention in St. John's Church, Richmond, which set the hearts of his hearers ablaze.
"Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute" (A toast at a dinner to John Marshall, 1796)	Pinckney, Gerry and Marshall indignantly refused to pay "a sixpence" when Talleyrand demanded a secret payment before negotiations for a treaty with the Directory: the famous slogan took form on their return.
"Peace at any price" (Charles F. de T. Montalembert, about 1848)	First voiced in opposition to extreme French nationalists, this was echoed by Lamartine, by John Bright in 1861, and by many in the World War.
"Go West, young man" (Horace Greeley)	Greeley's enthusiastic statement of the chances offered to Eastern youth by the new regions of the American West was a powerful influence.
"Blood and iron" (Prince Otto E. L. von Bismarck-Schönhausen, 1862)	Bismarck always maintained that his speech was meant figuratively; but the world thereafter saw in it the literal policy he advocated for Germany.
"Carry on" (England in the World War)	The embodiment of British dogged determination, in the dark days after the practical wiping out of their First Hundred Thousand.



Booklover's Calendar.

ORIGINALLY the first Roman month, sacred to, and probably named for, Aphrodite. Festivals of Venus, Cybele and Ceres; the Birthday of Rome, when the wine of the preceding autumn was tasted; and the "Floralia."

Greek: the latter part of Elaphebolion and most of Munychion.

Chinese and Zodiacal: The Dog station—which became Aries, the Ram ♈; on the 20th the sun passes to the Hen — Taurus ♉. In this third month occurred the symbolical ploughing of the earth by the emperor and the princes of the blood royal.

Hebrew: April 1, 1925, is the seventh of Nisan; Iyar begins April 25.

Mohammedan: Ramadàn, the ninth month, when the devout Moslem fasts for thirty days, lasts till the 24th, when Shawwàl starts. On the most sacred night of Al-Kadr, Mohammed received from Gabriel the Koran, written on parchment made of the skin of the ram which Abraham sacrificed in place of Isaac. This is the mystic Night of Power — the precise date known only to the Prophet and his companions — when the true believer may chance to see the heavens open.

American Indian: the Grass Moon. (Also **Holland:** Grasmaand.)

Anglo-Saxon: Ostermonth, from Eostre, goddess of Spring—whence also our Easter.

Japanese: Feast of the Dolls.

Hindu: the Huli, ending March 31, corresponds to our April Fool custom.

1 *All Fools' Day. The Scotch "hunt the gowk" (cuckoo); French jokers make "April fish"; Hindu observers of Huli send victims on false errands.*

I love a *Fool*—as naturally as if I were of kith and kin to him. LAMB.

2 And each flower and herb on
Earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry
rest. SHELLEY.

3 *Herbert born, 1593; Irving, 1783.*

That part of the season that never cloys upon the palate.
It does not surfeit one with good things, but provokes and stimulates the curiosity. BURROUGHS.

4 *Goldsmith died, 1774.*

We had a fricassee of rabbits, and chickens, a leg of mutton boiled, three carps in a dish, a great dish of a side of lamb, a dish of roasted pigeons, a dish of four lobsters, three tarts, a lamprey pie, a most rare pie, a dish of anchovies, good wine of several kinds, and all things to my great content. PEPYS.

5 APRIL FOOL, *n.* The March fool with another month added to his folly. AMBROSE BIERCE.

6 *Dürer died, 1528.*

"Room for the living," nature cries to us. "Do not darken my blue sky with your miseries." AMIEL.

7 *Wordsworth born, 1770; Davenant died, 1668.*

'Tis observed by the most learned physicians that the casting off of Lent and other fish-days . . . hath doubtless been the chief cause of those many putrid, shaking, intermitting agues. IZAAK WALTON.

8 *Hebrew Passover.*

. . . Proud-pied April, dress'd in
all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in every-
thing. SHAKESPEARE.

9 *Maundy Thursday. Holy Thursday at Rome: Blessing the Oils, Silencing the bells, Feet washing at St. Peter's, Pope serving at supper. Bacon died, 1626.*

My wife had been to-day at Whitehall to the Maundy . . . : but the King did not wash the poor people's feet himself, but the Bishop of London did it for him. PEPYS.

10 *Good Friday. Hazlitt born, 1778.*

Bread baked on Good Friday was kept all through the year under a belief that a few gratings of it in water would prove a specific for any ailment, but particularly for diarrhœa. (Hence the custom of Hot cross-buns.) CHAMBERS.

11 Princes, though your blood be
chill,
Here's shall make you leap and
fling,
Fling and leap like Jack and Jill!
'Tis the symphony of Spring.
HENLEY.

12 *Easter Sunday.*

Morning cometh there, bearing in her golden basket the wreath of beauty, silently to crown the earth. TAGORE.

13 *Handel died, 1759.*

It is the season now to go
About the country high and low,
Among the lilacs hand in hand,
And two by two in fairyland.
STEVENSON.

14 'Send the road is clear before
you when the old Spring
fret comes o'er you,
And the Red Gods call for you.
KIPLING.

15 April was quick in Nature like
green flame. MASEFIELD.

16 A modest garden and a country rectory, the narrow horizon of a garret, contain, for those who know how to look and to wait, more instruction than a library. AMIEL.

17 *Franklin died, 1790.*

In the Spring a lovelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove,
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Tennyson.

18 For now the fields were spread with growth, and the waters clad with sunshine; and light and shadow, step by step, wandered over the furzy cleves. Blackmore.

19 *Byron died, 1824.*

Nature possesses the secret of happiness, and no man has been able to take it away from her.

George Sand.

20 . . . here the cuckoo and the cuckoo-flower
Plight to the heart Spring's perfect imminent hour
Whose voice shall soothe you like your dear one's hand. Rossetti.

21 *Hocktide. Abelard died, 1142; Racine, 1699.*

It used to be the custom on this Tuesday for women to go into the streets and bind with cords all members of the other sex who came along—the latter being forced to purchase freedom by a money payment. (The men had had their turn the day before.)

22 *Fielding born, 1707; Kant died, 1724.*

The sparkling spring draws every day new colours, new insects, new flowers out of the earth. Richter.

23 *St. George's Day. Shakespeare died, 1616; Wordsworth, 1850.*

There are three things a wise man will not trust,—
The wind, the sunshine of an April day,
And woman's plighted faith.

Southey.

24 *St. Mark's Eve. Defoe died, 1731.*

On this night, between eleven and one, the ghosts of all those who are to die within the year are seen to pass into the church.

Old Superstition.

25 *Tasso died, 1595; Cowper, 1800.*

Dr. Henry Hammond, who died this day, 1660, was "the first man in England that had copy-money" (a price for copyright), being paid by the King's Printer for his "Annotations on the New Testament." Hearne.

26 *Hume born, 1711.*

O Poesy! Youth! Virginal beauty of woman! Thou couldst shine for me but for a moment, in the early dawn of early spring. Turgeniev.

27 *Gibbon born, 1737.*

'Tis April, and the willow leans to look
And see within the brook
Its fair new garniture of palest green.

Clinton Scollard.

28 *Cotton born, 1630.*

I heard a thousand blended notes
While in a grove I sat reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

Wordsworth.

29 A nightingale upon a cedre grene
Under the chambre wal ther-as she lay,
Ful loude song aye in the mone shene,
Paraunter, in his briddes wise, a lay
Of love which had made his herte gay. Chaucer.

30 *Chevalier Bayard killed, 1524.*

"It is too late" (when urged to retreat), "but my soul is God's and my life is my country's."

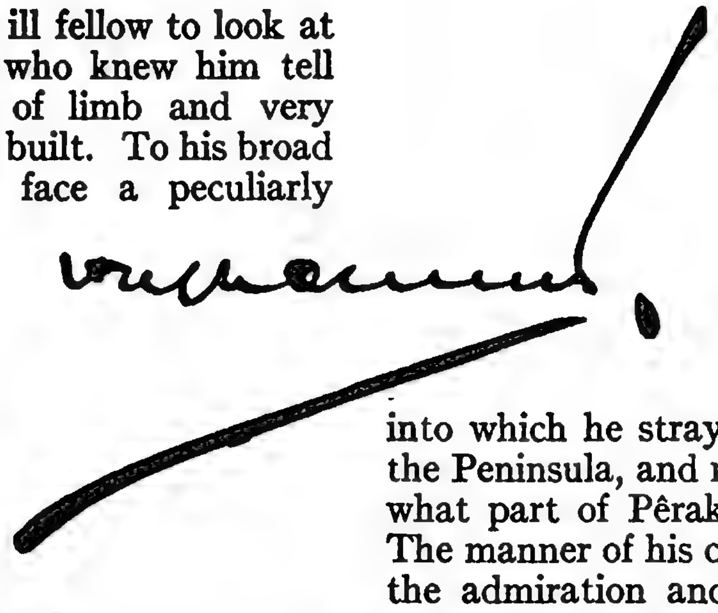
Bayard.

The Golden Book Magazine

Volume I APRIL, 1925 Number 4

The Lone-Hand Raid of Kûlop Sûmbing

By SIR HUGH CLIFFORD



HE WAS an ill fellow to look at—so men who knew him tell me—large of limb and very powerfully built. To his broad and ugly face a peculiarly sinister expression was imparted by a hare-lip, which left most of the upper gums exposed. It was to this latter embellishment that he owed alike his vicious temper and the name by which he was known. That his disposition should not have been of the sweetest was natural enough, for women did not love to look upon the gash in his lip; and whereas, in the land of his birth, all first-born male children are called Kûlop, his nickname of *Sûmbing*—which means "the chipped one"—distinguished him unpleasantly from his fellows, and reminded him of his calamity whenever he heard it. He was a native of Pêrak, and he made his way alone, through the untrodden Sâkai country, into Pahang. That is practically all that is known concerning his origin. The name of the district in which Kûlop Sûmbing had his home represented nothing to the natives of the Jĕlai Valley, into which he strayed on the other side of the Peninsula, and now no man knows from what part of Pêrak this adventurer came. The manner of his coming, however, excited the admiration and impressed itself upon the imagination of the people of Pahang—who love pluck almost as heartily as they abominate toil—so the tale of his doings is still told, though these things happened nearly forty years ago.

Kûlop Sûmbing probably held a sufficiently cynical opinion on the subject of the character of his countrywomen, who are among the most venal of their sex. He knew that no woman could love him for his personal attractions, and that those who

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would be willing to put up with him and with his disfigurement would be themselves undesirable. On the other hand, experience convinced him that many would be ready to lavish their favours upon him if his money-bags were well lined. Therefore he determined to grow rich with as little delay as possible, and in order to compass this end he looked about for someone whom he could conveniently plunder. For this purpose Pêrak was played out. The law of the white men could not be bribed by a successful robber, and of recent years the chances of evading it had been much restricted. In these circumstances, he turned his eyes across the border to Pahang, which was still ruled by its own Sultan and his chiefs, and which bore a notable reputation as a land in which ill things might be done with impunity, to the great profit and contentment of him who did them.

He had a love of adventure, was absolutely fearless, and was, moreover, a good man with his weapons. To put these possessions to their proper uses more elbow-room was necessary than Pêrak afforded, for there a man was forever haunted by the threatening shadow of the central gaol; and as he did not share the Malay's instinctive dread of travelling alone in the jungle, he decided to make a lone-hand raid into the Sâkai country, which lies between Pêrak and Pahang. Here he would be safe from the grip of the white man's hand, hidden from the sight of the Government's "eyes," as the Malays so inappropriately name our somnolent policemen; and here, he felt sure, much wealth would come to the ready hand that knew full well how to seize it. To Kûlop Sûmbing, reasoning thus, the matter presented itself in the light of a purely business proposition. Such abstractions as ideas of right and wrong or questions of ethics or morality did not enter into the calculation; for the average unregenerate Malay is honest and law-abiding just as long as it suits his convenience to be so, and not more than sixty seconds longer. Virtue for virtue's sake makes not the faintest appeal to him, but a love of right-doing may occasionally be galvanized into a sort of paralytic life within him if the consequences of crime are kept very clearly and very constantly before his eyes. He will then discard sin because sinning has become inconvenient. So Kûlop Sûmbing kicked the dust of law-restrained Pêrak from his bare brown soles, and set out for the Sâkai country in the remote interior of Pahang, into which even the limping, lopsided justice of a native administration made no pretence to penetrate.

He carried with him all the rice that he could bear upon his shoulders, two dollars in silver, a little salt and tobacco, a handsome *kris*, and a long spear with a broad and shining blade. His supplies of food were to last him until the first Sâkai camps should be reached, and after that, he told himself, all that he might need would "rest at the tip of his dagger." He did not propose seriously to begin his operations until the mountain range, which fences the Pêrak boundary, had been crossed, so he was content to leave the Sâkai villages on the western slope unpillaged. He impressed some of the naked and scared aborigines to serve as bearers, and levied such supplies as he required; and the Sâkai, who were glad to get rid of him so cheaply, handed him on from village to village with the greatest alacrity. The base of the jungle-covered mountains of the interior was reached at the end of a fortnight, and Kûlop and his Sâkai began to drag themselves up the steep ascent by means of roots, trailing creepers, and slender saplings.

Upon a certain day they attained the summit of a nameless mountain, and threw themselves down, panting for breath, upon the bare, circular drumming-ground of an argus pheasant. On the crest of nearly every hill and hogsback in the interior of the Peninsula these drumming-grounds are found, patches of naked earth trodden to the hardness of a threshing-floor, and carpeted with a thin litter of dry twigs. Sometimes, if you keep very still, you may hear the cocks strutting and dancing, and mightily thumping the ground, but no man, it is said, has ever actually seen the birds going through their vainglorious performance. At night-time their challenging yell—incredibly loud, discordant, yet clear—rings out across the valleys, waking a thousand echoes, and the cry is taken up and thrown backward and forward from hill-cap to hill-cap. Judging by the frequency and the ubiquity of their yells, the argus pheasants must be very numerous in the jungles of the interior, but so deftly do they hide themselves that they are rarely seen, and the magnificence of their plumage, which rivals that of the peacock, is only familiar to us because the birds are often trapped by the Malays.

At the spot where Kûlop and his Sâkai lay the trees grew sparsely. The last two hundred feet of the ascent had been a severe climb, and the ridge, which formed the summit, stood clear of the tree-tops which had their roots halfway up the slope. As he lay panting, Kûlop Sûmbing gazed down for the first time upon the eastern side of the Peninsula, the theatre in which ere long he proposed to play a very daring part. At his feet were tree-tops of every shade of green, from the tender, brilliant colour which we associate with young corn to the deep and sombre hue which is almost black. The forest fell away beneath him in a broad slope, the contour of each individual tree, and the grey, white, or black lines which marked their trunks or branches growing less and less distinct, until the jungle covering the plain became a blurred wash of colour that had more of blue than green in it. Here and there, very far away, the sunlight smote something that answered with a dazzling flash, like the mirror of a heliograph, and this, Kûlop knew, was the broad reaches of a river. The forest hid all traces of human habitation or cultivation, and no sign of life or movement was visible save only a solitary kite circling and veering on outstretched, motionless wings, and the slight, uneasy swaying of some of the taller trees as a faint breeze sighed gently over the jungle. Here, on the summit of the mountains, the air was damp and chilly, and a cold wind was blowing, while the sun seemed to have lost half its usual power; but in the plain below the earth lay sweltering beneath the perpendicular rays, and the heat-haze danced and shimmered above the forest like the hot air above a furnace.

During the next few days Kûlop Sûmbing and his Pêrak Sâkai made their way down the eastern slope of the mountains, and through the silent forests, which are given over to game and to the really wild jungle-folk, who fly at the approach of human beings, and discover their proximity as instinctively as do the beasts which share with them their home.

Kûlop and his people passed several abandoned camps belonging to these wild Sâkai—mere rough hurdles of boughs and leaves, canted on end to form lean-to huts; but of their owners they saw no trace, for even when these people trade with the tamer Sâkai they adopt the immemorial custom of silent barter and never suffer themselves to be seen by the men with whom they do business. Their principal stock in trade are the long, straight reeds of which the inner casing of the blowpipe is made, and these they deposit in certain well-known places in the jungle, whence they are removed by the tamer tribesmen, who replace them by salt, knife-blades, flints and steels and other similar articles. Now and again a successful slave-raid has resulted in the capture of a few of these savages, but their extraordinary elusiveness, added to the fact that they live the life of the primitive nomadic hunter, roaming the forest in small family groups, renders them difficult to locate, and impossible to round up in any large numbers.

Kûlop Sûmbing, of course, took very little interest in them, for to his utilitarian mind people who possessed no property could make no claim upon the attention of a serious man. Therefore he pushed on through the wild Sâkai country, following game paths and wading down the beds of shallow streams until the upper waters of the Bĕtok, the principal tributary of the Jĕlai River, were struck. Here bamboos were felled, a long, narrow raft was constructed, and Kûlop Sûmbing, dismissing his Pêrak Sâkai, began the descent of the unknown river. He knew only that the stream upon which he was navigating would lead, if followed far enough, into the country inhabited by Malays; that somewhere between it and himself lay a tract peopled by semi-civilized Sâkai; that he proposed to despoil the latter, and would have some difficulty in preventing the Pahang Malays from pillaging him in their turn; but he fared onward undismayed, alone save for his weapons, and filled with a sublime confidence in his ability to plunder the undiscovered land that lay before him.

When you come to think of it, there was something bordering upon the heroic in the action of this unscrupulous man with the marred face, who glided gently down the river on this wild, lone-hand raid. Even the local geography was unknown to him. For aught he knew, the stream might be beset by impassable rapids and by dangers that would task his skill and courage to the utmost; and even if he triumphed over natural obstacles, the enmity which his actions would arouse would breed up foemen for him wherever he went. He was going forth deliberately to war against heavy odds, yet he poled his raft down the river with deft punts, and gazed calmly ahead of him with a complete absence of fear.

It was noon upon the second day of his lonely journey down the Bĕtok that Kûlop sighted a large Sâkai camp, evidently the property of semi-tame tribesfolk, set in a clearing on the right bank of the river. The sight of a Malay coming from such an unusual quarter filled the jungle-people with superstitious fear, and in a few minutes every man, woman, and child had fled into the forest.

Kûlop went through the ten or fifteen squalid huts which stood in the clearing, and an occasional grunt of satisfaction signified that he approved of the stores of valuable gum lying stowed away in the sheds. He calculated that there could not be less than seven *pîkul*, a quantity that would fetch a good six hundred Mexican dollars, even when the poor price ruling in the most distant Malayan villages of the interior was taken into consideration. This, of course, was long before such a product as plantation rubber had come into existence in the East, and wild gutta was much sought after by Europeans in the towns of the straits settlements. Now, six hundred dollars represented a small fortune to a man of Kûlop Sûmbing's standing, and the sight of so goodly a store of gum filled him with delight. But here he found himself faced by a problem of some difficulty. How was the precious stuff to be carried downstream into the Malayan districts of Pahang? His raft would hold about one *pîkul*, and he felt reasonably certain that the Sâkai, who were fairly used to being plundered by their Malayan neighbours, would not interfere with him very seriously if he chose to remove that quantity and to leave the rest. But the thought of the remaining six *pîkul* was too much for him. He could not find it in his heart to abandon it; and of a sudden he was seized by a dull anger against the Sâkai who, he almost persuaded himself, were in some sort defrauding him of his just dues.

Seating himself on the threshold beam in the doorway of one of the huts, he lighted a *rôkok*—a cigarette of coarse Javanese tobacco encased in a dried shoot of the *nîpah* palm, and set himself to think out the situation and to await the return of the tribesmen; and ever, as he dwelt upon the injury which these miscreants were like to inflict upon him if they refused to help him to remove the gutta, his heart waxed hotter and hotter against them.

Presently two scared brown faces, scarred with blue tattoo-marks on cheek and forehead, and surmounted by frowzy mops of sun-bleached hair, rose stealthily above the level of the flooring a dozen yards away, and peeped at him with shy, distrustful eyes.

Kûlop turned in their direction, and the bobbing heads disappeared with astonishing alacrity.

"Come hither," Kûlop commanded.

The heads reappeared once more, and in a few brief words Kûlop bade their owners have no fear, but go back into the forest and fetch the rest of the tribesfolk.

After some further interchange of words and considerable delay and hesitation, the two Sâkai sidled off into the jungle, and presently a crowd of squalid aborigines issued from the shelter of the trees and underwood. They stood huddled together in an uneasy group, gazing curiously at Kûlop, while with light feet they trod the ground gingerly, with every muscle braced for a swift dart into cover at the first alarm of danger.

"Who among you is the headman?" asked Kûlop.

"Your servant is the headman," replied an ancient Sâkai.

He stood forward a little as he spoke, trembling slightly as he glanced up furtively at the Malay, who sat cross-legged in the doorway of the hut. His straggling mop of hair was almost white, and his skin was dry and creased and wrinkled. He was naked, as were all his people, save for a dirty loin-clout of bark cloth, which use had reduced to a mere whisp. His thin flanks and buttocks were gray with the warm wood ashes in which he had been lying when Kûlop's coming interrupted his midday snooze.

"Bid these, your children, build me eight rafts of bamboo, strong and firm, and moor them at the foot of the rapid yonder," ordered Kûlop. "And hearken, be not slow, for I love not indolence."

"It can be done," said the Sâkai headman submissively.

"That is well," returned Kûlop. "And I counsel you to see to it with speed, for I am a man very prone to wrath."

Casting furtive glances at the Malay, the Sâkai set to work, and by nightfall the new rafts were completed. For his part, Kûlop of the Harelip, who had declared that he loved not indolence, lay upon his back on the floor of the chief's hut, while the jungle-people toiled for him, and roared a love song in a harsh, discordant voice to the hypothetical lady whose heart was presently to be subdued by the wealth which was now almost within his grasp.

Kûlop slept that night in the Sâkai hut among the restless jungle-folk. Up here in the foothills the air was chilly, and the fire, which the Sâkai never willingly let die, smoked and smouldered in the middle of the floor. Half a dozen long logs, all pointing to a common centre, like the spokes of a broken wheel, met at the point where the fire burned red in the darkness, and between these boughs, in the warm gray ashes, men, women, and children sprawled in every attitude into which their naked brown limbs could twist themselves. Ever and anon some of them would arise and tend the fire, and then would group themselves squatting around the blaze, and jabber in the jerky, monosyllabic jargon of the aborigines. The pungent smoke enshrouded them, and their eyes waxed red and watery, but they heeded it not, for the warmth of fire is one of the Sâkai's few luxuries, and the discomforts connected with it are to them the traditional crumpled rose leaf.

And Kûlop of the Harelip slept the sleep of the just.

The dawn broke grayly, for a mist hung low over the forest, white as driven snow, and cold and clammy as the forehead of a corpse. The naked Sâkai peeped shiveringly from the doorways of their huts, and then went shuddering back to the grateful warmth of their fires, and the frowzy atmosphere within.

Kûlop alone made his way down to the river bank, and there performed his morning ablutions with scrupulous care, for whatever laws of God or man a Malay may disregard, he never is unmindful of the virtue of personal cleanliness which, in an Oriental, is ordinarily of more immediate importance to his neighbours than all the godliness in the world.

His ablutions completed, Kûlop climbed the steep bank, and standing outside the headman's hut, summoned the Sâkai from their lairs in strident tones, bidding them hearken to his words. They stood or squatted before him in the white mist, through which the sun, just peeping above the jungle, was beginning to send long slanting rays of dazzling white light.

They were cold and miserable—this little crowd of naked savages—and they shivered and scratched their bodies restlessly. The trilling of the thrushes, and the morning chorus raised by the other birds, came to their ears, mingled with the whooping of troops of anthropoid apes, but this joyous music held no inspiration for the Sâkai. The extraordinary dampness of the air during the first hours after daybreak, in these remote jungle places of the Peninsula, chills men to the marrow and is appallingly depressing. Moreover, the Sâkai are very sensitive to cold, and it is when dawn has roused them and the fierce heat of the day has not yet broken through the mists to cheer them, that their thin courage and vitality are at the lowest ebb.

"Listen to me, you Sâkai," cried Kûlop in a loud and wrathful voice; and at the word those of his hearers who were standing erect made haste to assume a humble squatting posture, and the shiverings occasioned by the cold were increased by tremblings born of fear.

If there be one thing that the jungle-folk dislike more than another, it is to be called "Sâkai" to their faces, and they are never so addressed by a Malay unless he wishes to bully them. The word, which has long ago lost its original meaning, signifies a slave, or some say, a dog; but by the aborigines it is regarded as the most offensive epithet in the Malayan vocabulary. In their own tongue they speak of themselves as *sĕn-oi*—which means a "man"—as opposed to *gob*, which signifies "foreigner"; for even the Sâkai has some vestiges of pride, if you know where to look for it, and from his point of view the people of his own race are the only human beings who are entitled to be classed as "men," without any qualifying term. When speaking Malay, they allude to themselves as *Ôrang Bûkit*—men of the hills; *Ôrang Ûtan*—men of the jungle; or *Ôrang Dâlam*—the folk who live *within*, viz., within the forest. They love to be spoken of as *raayat*—peasants, or as *raayat râja*—the king's people; and the Malays, who delight in nicely graded distinctions of vocative in addressing men of various ranks and classes, habitually use these terms when conversing with the Sâkai, in order that the hearts of the jungle-folk may be warmed within them. When, therefore, the objectionable term "Sâkai" is applied to them, the forest-dwellers know that mischief and trouble are threatening, and as they are as timid as any other wild animals of the woods, they are forthwith stricken with terror.

"Listen, you accursed Sâkai," Kûlop of the Harelip cried again, waving his spear above his head. "Mark well my words, for already I seem to hear the warm earth calling to the coffin planks in which your carcasses shall presently lie if you fail to do my bidding. Go speedily and gather up all the gutta that is stored in your dwellings, and bring it hither to me lest some worse thing befall you."

The Sâkai, eying him fearfully, decided that they had to deal with a determined person whose irritable temper would quickly translate itself from words into deeds. Slowly, therefore, they rose up and walked, each man to his hut, with lagging steps. In a few minutes the great balls of rubber, with a hole punched in each through which a rattan line was passed, lay heaped upon the ground at Kûlop's feet. During the absence of the men, the women and children had almost imperceptibly dribbled away, and most of them were now hidden from sight behind the huts or the felled trees of the clearing. But the men when they returned brought with them something as well as the rubber, for each of the Sâkai now held in his hand a long and slender spear fashioned from a bamboo. The weapon sounds harmless enough, but these wooden blades are strong, and their points and edges are as sharp as steel. Kûlop Sûmbing was shocked and outraged by this insolent suggestion of resistance, and arrived at the conclusion that prompt action must supplement rough words.

"Cast away your spears, you swine of the forest!" he yelled.

Almost all the Sâkai did as Kûlop bade them, for the Malay stood for them as the embodiment of the dominant race, and years of oppression and wrong have made the jungle-folk very docile in the presence of the more civilized brown man. The old Chief, however, clutched his weapon in his trembling hands, and his terrified eyes ran round the group of his kinsmen, vainly inciting them to follow his example. The next moment his gaze was recalled to Kûlop of the Harelip by a sharp pain in his right shoulder, as the spear of the Malay transfixed it. His own spear fell from his powerless arm, and the little crowd of Sâkai broke and fled. But a series of cries and threats from Kûlop, as he ran around them, herding them as a collie herds sheep, brought them presently to a standstill.

No thought of further resistance remained in their minds, and the gutta was quickly loaded on to the rafts, and the plundered Sâkai impressed as crews for them. The rafts were fastened to one another, by Kûlop's orders, by a stout piece of rattan, to prevent straying or desertion, and the conqueror sat at ease on a low platform in the centre of the rearmost raft, keeping a watchful eye on all, and maintaining his mastery over the shuddering jungle-folk by frequent threats and admonitions.

The wounded Chief, left behind in his hut, sent two youths through the forest to bid their fellow tribesmen make ready the poison for their blowpipe darts, for he knew that no one would now dare to attack Kûlop of the Harelip at close quarters. But the poison which the Sâkai distil from the resin of the *îpoh* tree requires some time for its preparation, and if it is to be used with effect upon a human being or any large animal, a specially strong solution is necessary. Above all, if it is to do its work properly, it must be newly brewed. Thus it was that Kûlop Sûmbing had time to load his rafts with gutta taken from two other Sâkai camps, and to pass very nearly out of the jungle people's country before the men whom he had robbed were in a position to assume the offensive.

The Bĕtuk River falls into the Upper Jĕlai, a stream which is also given over entirely to the Sâkai, and it is not until the latter river meets the Tĕlom and the Sĕrau, and with their combined waters form the lower Jĕlai, that the banks begin to be studded with scattered Malayan habitations.

Kûlop of the Harelip, of course, knew nothing of the geography of the country through which he was travelling, but running water, if followed down sufficiently far, presupposed the discovery, sooner or later, of villages peopled by folk of his own race. Therefore, he pressed forward eagerly, bullying and goading his Sâkai into something resembling energy. He had now more than a thousand dollars' worth of rubber on his rafts, and he was growing anxious for its safety. To the danger in which he himself went, he was perfectly callous and indifferent.

It was at Kuâla Mĕrăbau—a spot where a tiny stream falls into the upper Jĕlai on its right bank—that a small party of Sâkai lay in hiding, peering through the vegetation at the gliding waters down which Kûlop and his plunder must presently come. Each man carried at his side a quiver, fashioned from a single length of bamboo, ornamented with the dots, crosses, zigzags, and triangles which the Sâkai delight to brand upon their vessels. Each quiver was filled with darts about the thickness of a steel knitting needle, and some fifteen inches in length, with an elliptical piece of light wood at one end to steady it in its flight, and at the other a very sharp tip, coated with the black venom of the *îpoh* sap. In their hands each man of the ambushing party held a reed blowpipe, ten or twelve feet long, and rudely but curiously carved.

Presently the foremost Sâkai stood erect, his elbows spread-eagled and level with his ears, his feet heel to heel, his body leaning slightly forward from the hips. His hands were locked together at the mouthpiece of his blowpipe, the long reed being held firmly by the thumbs and forefingers, which were coiled above it, while the weight rested upon the lower interlaced fingers of both hands. His mouth, nestling closely against the wooden mouthpiece, was puckered and his cheeks drawn in, like those of a man who seeks to spit out a shred of tobacco which the loose end of a cigarette has left between his lips. His keen, wild eyes glared unflinchingly along the length of his blowpipe, little hard wrinkles forming at their corners.

"*Pit!*" said the blowpipe.

The wad of dry pith, which had been used to exclude the air around the head of the dart, fell into the water a dozen yards away, and the dart itself flew forward with incredible speed, straight to the mark at which it was aimed.

A slight shock on his right side, just above the hip, apprised Kûlop that something had struck him, and looking down he saw the dart still quivering in his waist. But, as luck would have it, Kûlop carried under his coat a gaudy bag, ornamented with beads, and stuffed with the ingredients of the betel quid, and in this the dart had embedded itself. The merest fraction of a second was all that Kûlop needed to see this, and to take in the whole situation. With him action and perception kept even step. Before the dart had ceased to shudder, before the Sâkai on the bank had had time to send another in its wake, before the men poling his raft had fully grasped what was happening, Kûlop had seized the nearest of them by his frowzy halo of elflocks, and had drawn him screaming across his knees. The terrified creature writhed and bellowed, flinging his body about wildly, and his friends upon the bank feared to blow their darts lest they should inadvertently wound their kinsman while trying to kill the Malay.

"Have a care, you swine of the forest!" roared Kûlop, cuffing the yelling Sâkai unsparingly in order to keep his limbs in constant motion. "Have a care, you sons of fallen women! If you spew forth one more of your darts, this man, your little brother, dies forthwith by my *kris*."

The Sâkai on the bank had no reason to doubt the sincerity of Kûlop's intentions, and as these poor creatures love their relatives, both near and distant, far more than is usual in more civilized communities where those connected by ties of blood do not necessarily live together in constant close association, they dared not blow another dart. Moreover, one poisoned arrow had apparently gone home, and a single drop of the powerful solution of the *ipoh* which they were using sufficed, as they well knew, to cause death accompanied by excruciating agony. The attacking party therefore drew off, and Kûlop of the Harelip proceeded upon his way rejoicing; but he kept his Sâkai across his knee, none the less, and occasionally administered to him a sounding cuff for the stimulation of his fellows.

Thus Kûlop won his way in safety out of the Sâkai country, and that night he stretched himself to sleep upon a mat spread on the veranda of a Malayan house, in the full enjoyment of excellent health, the knowledge that he was at last a rich man, and a delightful consciousness of having performed great and worthy deeds.

For a month or two he lived in the valley of the Jĕlai, at Bûkit Bĕtong, the village which was the headquarters of the Dâto' Maharâja Pĕrba, the great up-country chief, who at that time ruled most of the interior of Pahang. He sold his rubber to this potentate, and as he let it go for something less than the market price, the sorrows of the Sâkai were the cause of considerable amusement to the local authorities from whom they sought redress.

But Kûlop of the Harelip had left his heart behind him in Pêrak, for the natives of that State, men say, can never long be happy when beyond the limits of their own country, and must always sooner or later make their way back to drink again of the waters of their silver river. Perhaps, too, Kûlop had some particular lady in his mind when he set out upon his quest for wealth, for all the world over, if you trace matters to their source, the best work and the most blackguardly deeds of men are usually to be ascribed to the women who sit at the back of their hearts, and supply the driving-power which impels them to good or to evil.

One day Kûlop of the Harelip presented himself before the Dâto' Maharâja Pĕrba, as the latter lay smoking his opium pipe upon the soft mats in his house, and informed him that, as he had come to seek permission to leave Pahang, he had brought a present—"a thing trifling and unworthy of his notice"—which he begged the chief to honour him by accepting.

"When do you go down river?" inquired the Dâto', for the Jĕlai Valley is in the far interior of Pahang, and if a man would leave the country by any of the ordinary routes, he must begin his journey by travelling downstream at least as far as Kuâla Lîpis.

"Your servant goes *up* stream," replied Kûlop Sûmbing.

The Dâto' gave vent to an expression of incredulous surprise.

"Your servant returns the way he came," said Kûlop.

The Dâto' burst out into a torrent of excited expostulation. It was death, certain death, he said, for Kûlop to attempt once more to traverse the Sâkai country. The other routes were open, and no man would dream of staying him if he sought to return to his own country by land or sea. The course he meditated was folly, was madness, was an impossibility. But to all these words Kûlop of the Harelip turned a deaf ear. He knew Malayan chieftains and all their ways and works pretty intimately, and he had already paid too heavy a toll to the Dâto' to have any desire to see his honest earnings further diminished by other similar exactions. If he took his way homeward through country inhabited by Malays, he knew that at every turn he would have to satisfy the demands of the barons and chiefs and headmen whose territory he would cross on his journey, and the progressive dwindling of his hoard which this would entail was a certainty that he would not face. On the other hand, he held the Sâkai in utter contempt, and as at this stage of the proceedings he was incapable of feeling fear, the Dâto''s estimate of the risks he was running did not move him. A sinister grin distorted his face as he listened to the chief's words, for he regarded them as a cunning attempt to induce him to penetrate more deeply into Pahang in order that he might thereafter be plundered with greater ease. Accordingly, he declined to accept the advice offered to him, and a couple of days later he set out upon his return journey through the forests.

He knew that it would be useless to attempt to persuade any one to accompany him, so he went, as he had come, alone. The dollars into which he had converted his loot were hard and heavy upon his back, and he was further loaded with a supply of rice, dried fish, and salt; but his weapons were as bright as ever, and to him they still seemed the only comrades which a reasonable man need hold to be essential. He travelled on foot, for single-handed he could not pole a raft against the current, and he followed such paths as he could find, guiding himself mainly by the direction from which the rivers flowed. His plan was to ascend the valley through which the Bêtok ran, until the mountains were reached, and after crossing them to strike some stream on the Pêrak side of the range, down which it would be possible to navigate a bamboo raft.

He soon found himself back in the Sâkai country, and passed several of the jungle-folk's camps, which were all abandoned at his approach; but though he halted at one or two of them in order to replenish his scanty stock of provisions, he considered it more prudent to pass the night in the jungle.

It was on the evening of the third day that Kûlop became aware of an unpleasant sensation. The moon was at the full, and he could see for many yards around him in the forest, but though no living thing was visible, he became painfully conscious of the fact that he was being watched. Occasionally he thought that he caught the glint of eyes peeping at him from the underwood, and every now and again a dry twig snapped crisply, first on one side of him, then on the other, in front of him, behind him. He started to his feet and sounded the *sôrak*—the war-cry—that pealed in widening echoes through the forest. A rustle in half a dozen different directions at once showed him that the watchers had been numerous, and that they were now taking refuge in flight.

Kûlop of the Harelip sat down again beside his fire, and a new and strange sensation began to lay cold fingers about his heart. It was accompanied by an uneasy feeling in the small of his back, as though a spear-thrust in that particular part of his person was momentarily to be expected, and a clammy dampness broke out upon his forehead, while the skin behind his ears felt unwontedly cold. Danger that he could see and face had never had any power to awe him, but his isolation and the invisibility of his enemies combined to produce in him some curious phenomena. Perhaps even Kûlop of the Harelip needed no man to tell him that he was experiencing fear.

He built up his fire, and sat near the blaze, trying to still the involuntary chattering of his teeth. If he could get at grips with his foes, fear, he knew, would leave him; but this eerie, uncanny sensation of being watched and hounded by crafty enemies whom he could not see was sawing his nerves to rags. From time to time he glanced uneasily over his shoulder and at last wedged his body in between the barrier roots of a big tree, so that he might be secure from assault from behind. As he sat thus, leaning slightly backward, he chanced to glance up, and in a treetop, some fifty yards away, he saw the crouching form of a Sâkai outlined blackly against the moonlit sky, amidst a network of boughs and branches.

In an instant he was on his feet, and again the *sôrak* rang out, as he flung himself at the underwood, striving to tear his way through it to the foot of the tree in which his enemy had been perched. But the jungle was thick and the shadows were heavy; he quickly lost his bearings, and was presently glad to stumble back to his fire again, torn with brambles and sweating profusely.

All through that night Kûlop of the Harelip strove to drive away sleep from his heavy eyes. He had been tramping all day, and his whole being was clamouring for rest. The hours were incredibly long, and he feared that the dawn would never come. During every minute he was engaged in an active and conscious battle with physical exhaustion. At one moment he would tell himself that he was wide awake, and a second later a rustle in the underwood startled him into a knowledge that he had slept. His waking nightmare merged itself inextricably into the nightmare of dreams. Over and over again, in an access of sudden panic, he leaped to his feet, and yelled the war-cry, though his dazed brain hardly knew whether he was defying the Sâkai besetting him or the spectres which thronged his sleep-drugged fancy; but each time the patter of feet and the snapping of twigs told him that those who watched him were stampeding. While he remained awake and on guard the Sâkai feared him too much to attack him. His previous escape from the dart which they had seen pierce his side had originated in their minds the idea that he was invulnerable, and proof against the *îpoh* poison, so they no longer tried to kill him with their blowpipes. That they dared not fall upon him unless he slept very soon became evident to Kûlop himself. Sleep was the ally of the Sâkai and his most dangerous enemy; but fear gripped him anew as he speculated as to what would happen when he at last was forced to yield to the weight of weariness that even now was oppressing him so sorely.

Presently a change began to come over the forest in which he sat. A whisper of sound from the trees around told him that the birds were beginning to stir. Objects, which hitherto had been black and shapeless masses cast into prominence by the clear moonlight, gradually assumed more definite shape. Later the colour of the trunks and leaves and creepers—still sombre and dull, but none the less colour—became perceptible, and Kûlop of the Harelip rejoiced exceedingly because the dawn had come and the horrors of the night were passing away.

Quickly he boiled his rice and devoured a meal; then, gathering up his belongings, he resumed his journey. All that day, though physical weariness pressed heavily upon him, he trudged onward stubbornly; but the news had spread among the Sâkai that their enemy was once more among them, and the number of the jungle-folk who dogged his footsteps steadily increased. Kûlop could hear their shrill whoops as they called to one another through the forest, giving warning of his approach, or signalling the path that he was taking. Once or twice he fancied that he caught a glimpse of a lithe brown body, of a pair of glinting eyes, or of a straggling mop of hair; and forthwith he would charge, shouting furiously. But the figure—if indeed it had any existence save in his overwrought imagination— always vanished as suddenly and as noiselessly as a shadow, long before he could come within striking distance. This experience, Kûlop found, was far more trying to the nerves than any stand-up fight could have been. Violent action and the excitement of a bloody hand-to-hand encounter would have supplied him with an anodyne; but the invisibility of his enemy, and the intangible character of their pursuit of him added the terrors of a fever dream to the very imminent danger in which he now knew himself to be.

The night which followed that day was a period of acute agony to the weary man, who dared not sleep; and about midnight he again resumed his march, hoping thereby to elude his pursuers.

For an hour he believed himself to have succeeded in this. Then the shrill yells began once more to sound from the forest all around him, and at the first cry Kûlop's heart sank. Still he stumbled on, too tired out to charge at his phantom enemy, too hoarse at last even to raise his voice in the *sôrak*, but doggedly determined not to give in. He was beginning, however, visibly to fail, and as he showed visible signs of distress, the number and the boldness of his pursuers increased proportionately. Soon their yells were resounding on every side, and Kûlop, staggering forward, seemed like some lost soul, wending his way to the Bottomless Pit, with an escort of mocking devils chanting their triumphant chorus around him.

Yet another unspeakable day followed, and when once more the night shut down, Kûlop of the Harelip sank exhausted upon the ground. His battle was over. He could bear up no longer against the weight of his weariness and the insistent craving for sleep. Almost as his head touched the warm litter of dead leaves, with which the earth in all Malayan jungles is strewn, his heavy eyelids closed and his breast rose and fell to the rhythm of his regular breathing. He was halfway up the mountains now, and almost within reach of safety, but Kûlop of the Harelip—Kûlop the resolute, the fearless, the strong, and the enduring—had reached the end of his tether. He had been beaten, not by the Sâkai, but by Nature, whom no man may long defy; and to her assaults he surrendered his will and slept.

Presently the underwood was parted by human hands in half a dozen different places, and the Sâkai crept stealthily out of the jungle into the little patch of open in which their enemy lay at rest. He moved uneasily in his sleep—not on account of any noise made by them, for they came as silently as a cloud shadow cast across a landscape; and at once the Sâkai halted with lifted feet, ready to plunge back into cover should their victim awake. But Kûlop, utterly exhausted, was sleeping heavily, wrapped in the slumber from which he was never again to be aroused.

The noiseless jungle-folk, armed with heavy clubs and bamboo spears, stole to within a foot or two of the unconscious Malay. Then nearly a score of them raised their weapons, poised them aloft, and brought them down simultaneously on the head and body of their enemy. Kûlop's limbs stretched themselves slowly and stiffly, his jaw fell, and blood flowed from him in twenty places. No cry escaped him, but the trembling Sâkai looked down upon his dead face, and knew that at last he had paid his debt to them in full.

They carried off none of his gear, for they feared to be haunted by his ghost, and Kûlop at the last had nothing edible with him, such as the jungle-folk find it hard to leave untouched. Money had no meaning for the Sâkai, so the silver dollars, which ran in a shining stream from a rent made in his linen waist pouch by a chance spear thrust, lay glinting in the moonlight by the side of that still, grey face rendered ghastly in death by the pallid lip split upward to the nostrils. Thus the Sâkai took their leave of Kûlop Sûmbing, as he lay stretched beside the riches which he had won at so heavy a cost.

If you want some ready money and a good *kris* and spear, both of which have done execution in their day, they are all to be had for the gathering at a spot in the forest not very far from the boundary between Pahang and Pêrak. You must find the place for yourself, however, for the Sâkai to a man will certainly deny all knowledge of it. Therefore it is probable that Kûlop of the Harelip will rise up on the Judgment Day with his ill-gotten property intact.

AS IT WAS EIGHT HUNDRED YEARS AGO

Mine

THOU art mine. I am thine,
That is clear as sunshine.
Thou art locked tight
Within my heart,
And the key is thrown away,
So that you must always stay.

TWELFTH CENTURY GERMAN SONG.

The Man from Red Dog

By ALFRED HENRY LEWIS

Alfred Henry Lewis

"LET me try one of them thar seegyars."

It was the pleasant after-dinner hour, and I was on the veranda for a quiet smoke. The Old Cattleman had just thrown down his paper; the half-light of the waning sun was a bit too dim for his eyes of seventy years.

"Whenever I beholds a seegyar," said the old fellow, as he puffed voluminously at the *principe* I passed over, "I thinks of what that witness says in the murder trial at Socorro.

"'What was you-all doin' in camp yourse'f,' asks the jedge of this yere witness, 'the day of the killin'?'

"'Which,' says the witness, oncrossin' his laigs an' lettin' on he ain't made bashful an' oneasy by so much attentions bein' shown him, 'which I was a-eatin' of a few sardines, a-drinkin' of a few drinks of whiskey, a-smokin' of a few seegyars, an' a-romancin' 'round.'"

After this abrupt, not to say ambiguous reminiscence, the Old Cattleman puffed contentedly a moment.

"What murder trial was this you speak of?" I asked. "Who had been killed?"

"Now I don't reckon I ever does know who it is gets downed," he replied. "This yere murder trial itse'f is news to me complete. They was waggin' along with it when I trails into Socorro that time, an' I merely sa'nters over to the co't that a-way to hear what's goin' on. The jedge is sorter gettin' in on the play while I'm listenin'.

"'What was the last words of this yere gent who's killed?' asks the jedge of this witness.

"'As nearly as I keeps tabs, jedge,' says the witness, 'the dyin' statement of this person is: "Four aces to beat."'

"'Which if deceased had knowed Socorro like I does,' says the jedge, like he's commentin' to himse'f, 'he'd shorely realized that sech remarks is simply sooicidal.'"

Again the Old Cattleman relapsed into silence and the smoke of the *principe*.

"How did the trial come out?" I queried. "Was the accused found guilty?"

"Which the trial itse'f," he replied, "don't come out. Thar's a passel of the boys who's come into town to see that jestice is done, an' bein' the round-up is goin' for'ard at the time, they nacherally feels hurried an' pressed for leesure. They-alls oughter be back on the range with their cattle. So the fifth day, when things is loiterin' along at the trial till it looks like the law has hobbles on, an' the word goes round it's goin' to be a week yet before the jury gets action on this miscreant who's bein' tried, the boys becomes plumb aggravated an' wearied out that a-way; an', kickin' in the door of the calaboose, they searches out the felon, swings him to a cottonwood not otherwise engaged, an' the right prevails. Nacherally the trial bogs down right thar."

After another season of silence and smoke, the Old Cattleman struck in again.

"Speakin' of killin's, while I'm the last gent to go fosterin' idees of bloodshed, I'm some discouraged jest now by what I've been readin' in that paper about a dooel between some Eytalians, an' it shorely tries me the way them aliens plays hoss. It's obvious as stars on a cl'ar night, they never means fight a little bit. I abhors dooels, an' cowers from the mere idee. But, after all, business is business, an' when folks fights 'em the objects of the meetin' oughter be blood. But the way these yere European shorthorns fixes it, a gent shorely runs a heap more resk of becomin' a angel abrupt, attendin' of a Texas cake-walk in a purely social way.

"Do they ever fight dooels in the West?

Why, yes—some. My mem'ry comes a-canterin' up right now with the details of an encounter I once beholds in Wolfville. Thar ain't no time much throwed away with a dooel in the Southwest. The people's mighty extemporaneous, an' don't go browsin' 'round none sendin' challenges in writin', an' that sort of flapdoodle. When a gent notices the signs a-gettin' about right for him to go on the war-path, he picks out his meat, surges up, an' declar's himse'f. The victim, who is most likely a mighty serious an' experienced person, don't copper the play by makin' vain remarks, but brings his gatlin' into play surprisin'. Next it's bang! bang! bang! mixed up with flashes an' white smoke, an' the dooel is over complete. The gent who still adorns our midst takes a drink on the house, while St. Peter onbars things a lot an' arranges gate an' seat checks with the other in the realms of light. That's all thar is to it. The tide of life ag'in flows onward to the eternal sea, an' nary ripple.

"Oh, this yere Wolfville dooel! Well, it's this a-way. The day is blazin' hot, an' business layin' prone an' dead—jest blistered to death. A passel of us is sorter pervadin' 'round the dance-hall, it bein' the biggest an' coolest store in camp. A monte game is strugglin' for breath in a feeble, fitful way in the corner, an' some of us is a-watchin'; an' some a-settin' 'round loose a-thinkin'; but all keepin' mum an' still, 'cause it's so hot.

"Jest then some gent on a hoss goes whoopin' up the street a-yellin' an' a-whirlin' the loop of his rope, an' allowin' generally he's havin' a mighty good time.

"'Who's this yere toomultuous man on the hoss?' says Enright, a-regardin' of him in a displeased way from the door.

"'I meets him up the street a minute back,' says Dan Boggs, 'an' he allows he's called "The Man from Red Dog." He says he's took a day off to visit us, an' aims to lay waste the camp some before he goes back.'

"About then the Red Dog man notes old Santa Rosa, who keeps the Mexican *baile* hall, an' his old woman, Marie, a-fussin' with each other in front of the New York Store. They's locked horns over a drink or somethin', an' is pow-wowin' mighty onamiable.

"'Whatever does this yere Mexican fam'ly mean,' says the Red Dog man, a-surveyin' of 'em plenty scornful, 'a-draggin' of their domestic brawls out yere to offend a sufferin' public for? Whyever don't they stay in their wickeyup an' fight, an' not take to puttin' it all over the American race which ain't in the play none an' don't thirst tharfor? However, I unites an' reeconciles this divided household easy.'

"With this the Red Dog man drops the loop of his lariat 'round the two contestants an' jumps his bronco up the street like it's come outen a gun. Of course Santa Rosa an' Marie goes along on their heads permiscus.

"They goes coastin' along ontil they gets pulled into a mesquite-bush, an' the rope slips offen the saddle, an' thar they be. We-alls goes over from the dance-hall, extricatin' of 'em, an' final they rounds up mighty hapless an' weak, an' can only walk. They shorely lose enough hide to make a pair of leggin's.

"'Which I brings 'em together like twins,' says the Red Dog man, ridin' back for his rope. 'I offers two to one, no limit, they don't fight none whatever for a month.'

"Which, as it shorely looks like he's right, no one takes him. So the Red Dog man leaves his bluff a-hangin' an' goes into the dance-hall, a-givin' of it out cold an' clammy he meditates libatin'.

"'All promenade to the bar,' yells the Red Dog man as he goes in. 'I'm a wolf, an' it's my night to howl. Don't 'rouse me, barkeep, with the sight of merely one bottle; set 'em all up. I'm some fastidious about my fire-water an' likes a chance to select.'

"Well, we-alls takes our inspiration, an' the Red Dog man tucks his onder his belt an' then turns round to Enright.

"'I takes it you're the old he-coon of this yere outfit?' says the Red Dog man, soopercillious-like.

"'Which, if I ain't,' says Enright, 'it's plenty safe as a play to let your wisdom flow this a-way till the he-coon gets yere.'

"'If thar's anythin',' says the Red Dog man, 'I turns from sick, it's voylence an' deevastation. But I hears sech complaints constant of this yere camp of Wolfville, I takes my first idle day to ride over an' line things up. Now yere I be, an' while I regrets it, I finds you-alls is a lawless, onregenerate set, a heap sight worse than roomer. I now takes the notion—for I sees no other trail—that by next drink time I climbs into the saddle, throws my rope 'round this den of sin, an' removes it from the map.'

"'Nacherally,' says Enright, some sarcastic, 'in makin' them schemes you ain't lookin' for no trouble whatever with a band of tarrapins like us.'

"'None whatever,' says the Red Dog man, mighty confident. 'In thirty minutes I distributes this yere hamlet 'round in the landscape same as them Greasers; which feat becomin' hist'ry, I then canters back to Red Dog.'

"'Well,' says Enright, 'it's plenty p'lite to let us know what's comin' this a-way.'

"'Oh! I ain't tellin' you none,' says the Red Dog man, 'I simply lets fly this hint, so any of you-alls as has got bric-a-brac he values speshul, he takes warnin' some an' packs it off all safe.'

"It's about then when Cherokee Hall, who's lookin' on, shoulders in between Enright an' the Red Dog man, mighty positive. Cherokee is a heap sot in his idees, an' I sees right off he's took a notion ag'in the Red Dog man.

"'As you've got a lot of work cut out,' says Cherokee, eyein' the Red Dog man malignant, 's'pose we tips the canteen ag'in.'

"'I shorely goes you,' says the Red Dog man. 'I drinks with friend, an' I drinks with foe; with the pard of my bosom an' the shudderin' victim of my wrath all sim'lar.'

"Cherokee turns out a big drink an' stands a-holdin' of it in his hand. I wants to say right yere, this Cherokee's plenty guileful.

"'You was namin',' says Cherokee, 'some public improvements you aims to make; sech as movin' this yere camp 'round some, I believes?'

"'That's whatever,' says the Red Dog man, 'an' the holycaust I 'nitiates is due to start in fifteen minutes.'

"'I've been figgerin' on you,' says Cherokee, 'an' I gives you the result in strict confidence without holdin' out a kyard. When you-all talks of tearin' up Wolfville, you're a liar an' a hossthief, an' you ain't goin' to tear up nothin'.'

"'What's this I hears!' yells the frenzied Red Dog man, reachin' for his gun.

"But he never gets it, for the same second Cherokee spills the glass of whiskey straight in his eyes, an' the next he's anguished an' blind as a mole.

"'I'll fool this yere human simoon up a lot,' says Cherokee, a-hurlin' of the Red Dog man to the floor, face down, while his nine-inch bowie shines in his hand like the sting of a wasp. 'I shore fixes him so he can't get a job clerkin' in a store,' an' grabbin' the Red Dog man's ha'r, which is long as the mane of a pony, he slashes it off close in one motion.

"'Thar's a fringe for your leggin's, Nell,' remarks Cherokee, a-turnin' of the crop over to Faro Nell. 'Now, Doc,' Cherokee goes on to Doc Peets, 'take this yere Red Dog stranger over to the Red Light, fix his eyes all right, an' then tell him, if he thinks he needs blood in this, to take his Winchester an' go north in the middle of the street. In twenty minutes by the watch I steps outen the dance hall door a-lookin' for him. P'int him to the door all fair an' squar'. I don't aim to play nothin' low on this yere gent. He gets a chance for his ante.'

"Doc Peets sorter accoomliates the Red Dog man, who is cussin' an' carryin' on scand'lous, an' leads him over to the Red Light. In a minute word comes to Cherokee as his eyes is roundin' up all proper, an' that he's makin' war-medicine an' is growin' more hostile constant, an' to heel himse'f. At that Cherokee, mighty ca'm, sends out for Jack Moore's Winchester, which is an 'eight-squar',' latest model.

"'Oh, Cherokee!' says Faro Nell, beginnin' to cry, an' curlin' her arms 'round his neck. 'I'm 'fraid he's goin' to down you. Ain't thar no way to fix it? Can't Dan yere settle with this Red Dog man?'

"'Cert,' says Dan Boggs, 'an' I makes the trip too gleeful. Jest to spar' Nell's feelin's, Cherokee, an' not to interfere with no gent's little game, I takes your hand an' plays it.'

"'Not none,' says Cherokee; 'this is my deal. Don't cry, Nellie,' he adds, smoothin' down her yaller ha'r. 'Folks in my business has to hold themse'fs ready to face any game on the word, an' they never weakens or lays down. An' another thing, little girl; I gets this Red Dog sharp shore. I'm in the middle of a run of luck; I holds fours twice last night, with a flush an' a full hand out ag'in 'em.'

"Nell at last lets go of Cherokee's neck, an', bein' a female an' timid that a-way, allows she'll go, an' won't stop to see the shootin' none. We applauds the idee, thinkin' she might shake Cherokee some if she stays; an' of course a gent out shootin' for his life needs his nerve.

"Well, the twenty minutes is up; the Red Dog man gets his rifle offen his saddle an' goes down the middle of the street. Turnin' up his big sombrero, he squar's 'round, cocks his gun, an' waits. Then Enright goes out with Cherokee an' stands him in the street about a hundred yards from the Red Dog man. After Cherokee's placed he holds up his hand for attention an' says:

"'When all is ready I stands to one side an' drops my hat. You-alls fires at will.'

"Enright goes over to the side of the street, counts 'one,' 'two,' 'three,' an' drops his hat. Bangety! Bang! Bang! goes the rifles like the roll of a drum. Cherokee can work a Winchester like one of these yere Yankee 'larm-clocks, an' that Red Dog hold-up don't seem none behind.

"About the fifth fire the Red Dog man sorter steps for'ard an' drops his gun; an' after standin' onsteady for a second, he starts to cripplin' down at his knees. At last he comes ahead on his face like a landslide. Thar's two bullets plumb through his lungs, an' when we gets to him the red froth is comin' outen his mouth some plenteous.

"We packs him back into the Red Light an' lays him onto a monte-table. Bimeby he comes to a little an' Peets asks him whatever he thinks he wants.

"'I wants you-alls to take off my moccasins an' pack me into the street,' says the Red Dog man. 'I ain't allowin' for my old mother in Missoury to be told as how I dies in no gin-mill, which she shorely 'bominates of 'em. An' I don't die with no boots on, neither.'

"We-alls packs him back into the street ag'in, an' pulls away at his boots. About the time we gets 'em off he sags back convulsive, an' thar he is as dead as Santa Anna.

"'What sort of a game is this anyhow?' says Dan Boggs, who, while we stands thar, has been pawin' over the Red Dog man's rifle. 'Looks like this vivacious party's plumb locoed. Yere's his hand-sights wedged up for a thousand yards, an' he's been a-shootin' of cartridges with a hundred an' twenty grains of powder into 'em. Between the sights an' the jump of the powder, he's shootin' plumb over Cherokee an' aimin' straight at him.'

"'Nellie,' says Enright, lookin' remorseful at the girl, who colors up an' begins to cry ag'in, 'did you cold-deck this yere Red Dog sport this a-way?'

"'I'm 'fraid,' sobs Nell, 'he gets Cherokee; so I slides over when you-alls is waitin' an' fixes his gun some.'

"'Which I should shorely concede you did,' says Enright. 'The way that Red Dog gent manip'lates his weepon shows he knows his game; an' except for you a-settin' things up on him, I'm powerful afraid he'd spoiled Cherokee a whole lot.'

"'Well, gents,' goes on Enright, after thinkin' a while, 'I reckons we-alls might as well drink on it. Hist'ry never shows a game yet, an' a woman in it, which is on the squar', an' we meekly b'ars our burdens with the rest.'"

* * *

COUNTESS—Sirrah, tell my gentlewoman I would speak with her; Helen, I mean.

CLOWN—
Was this fair face the cause, quoth she,
Why the Grecians sacked Troy?
Fond done, done fond,
Was this King Priam's joy?
With that she sighèd as she stood,
With that she sighèd as she stood,
And gave this sentence then;
Among nine bad if one be good,
Among nine bad if one be good,
There's yet one good in ten.

COUNTESS—What, one good in ten? you corrupt the song, sirrah.

CLOWN—One good woman in ten, madam; which is a purifying o' the song: Would God would serve the world so all the year; we'ld find no fault with the tithe-woman, if I were the parson. One in ten, quoth a'! An we might have a good woman born but one every blazing star, or at an earthquake, 'twould mend the lottery well: a man may draw his heart out, ere a' pluck one. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

The Story of a White Blackbird

By ALFRED DE MUSSET

Translation by
Christopher Morley

A d. Musset

I

HOW glorious it is—and also how painful—to be an exception. I am not a fabulous bird, and Monsieur de Buffon has described me. But alas, I am extremely rare and very difficult to find. Would to heaven that I were quite impossible!

My father and mother were two good creatures who had been living for a number of years in a quiet old garden in the Marais. Theirs was a perfect household. My mother, in her nest in the thick shrubbery, laid regularly three times a year, and dozed on her eggs with old-fashioned faithfulness. Meanwhile my father, still elegant and high-spirited in spite of his advanced age, went picking about nearby all day long, bringing her luscious insects, which he carried delicately by the end of the tail to make the morsel all the more appetizing. In the evening he never failed (when the weather was fine) to entertain her with a song which delighted all the neighbourhood. They never quarreled; not the slightest unhappiness had ever troubled this congenial couple.

I had hardly come into the world when, for the first time in his life, my father began to show signs of bad temper. Although I was still only a dubious gray, he did not recognize in me either the colour or the shape of his numerous progeny.

"What a dirty child!" he sometimes said, looking crossly at me. "He must go rummaging in every rubbish pile and mud-hole he sees, to be always so shabby and grimy."

"Good heavens, my dear," my mother would say, snug in the old platter she had used for her nest, "what do you expect at his age? Weren't you a little ragamuffin yourself when you were young? Wait till he grows up, you'll see how handsome he'll be. He's one of the best that I've laid."

But even while she defended me, my mother wasn't deceived. She could see my fatal plumage growing, and it seemed a monstrosity. But she was like all mothers, who are often the more devoted to their offspring for their very imperfections—as if the fault was their own, or as if they resented the injustice of the life these children will have to lead.

When the time came for my first moult, my father became very thoughtful and watched me closely. While my feathers were coming out, he was kind enough, and even gave me some of the choicest tidbits when he saw me shivering almost naked in a corner. But as soon as my poor little cold wings began to grow downy again, at each white feather that appeared he became so angry I was afraid he would strip me bare for the rest of my life. Alas, I had no mirror; so I couldn't even guess the reason for this anger. I wondered why the best of parents should suddenly be so cruel.

One day the sunshine and my growing plumage had made me happy in spite of myself. While I was flying about in the garden, unluckily I began to sing. At the first note he heard, my father sprang up into the air like a rocket.

"What do I hear!" he cried. "Is that the way a blackbird whistles? Is that the way *I* whistle? Do you call that Whistling?" He turned toward my mother with a terrible face.

"Miserable woman!" he exclaimed. "Who has been laying in your nest?"

At these words my indignant mother flew out of her platter, hurting her foot as she went. She tried to speak, but her sobs choked her; she fell on the ground half senseless. I thought she was dying. Horrified, trembling with fright, I threw myself at my father's knees.

"Oh, father," I said, "if my whistling is all wrong, if I'm badly dressed, don't let mother be punished for it. Is it her fault if Nature has refused me a fine voice like yours? Is it her fault if I haven't got your handsome yellow beak and your fine black frock-coat, which make you look like a churchwarden eating an omelette? If Heaven has made me a monster, and if someone has got to be blamed for it, at least let *me* be the only one to suffer."

"That's not the question," my father said. "What's the meaning of this ridiculous way you have of whistling? Who taught you to whistle like that, contrary to all rules and customs?"

"I'm sorry, sir," I answered humbly. "I whistled the best I could. I felt happy because the weather was fine. Perhaps I've eaten too many flies."

"We don't whistle like that in my family," continued my father, beside himself with rage. "Father and son, we've been whistling for centuries. When I do a little singing in the evenings, I'd like you to know that the old gentleman on the first floor and the young girl in the attic open their windows to hear me. Isn't it bad enough to have the disgusting colour of your absurd feathers in front of my eyes? As if you'd been rolled in flour! If I weren't the kindest of blackbirds, I'd have stripped you a hundred times already, like a backyard chicken ready for the oven."

"Very well!" I screamed, revolted by my father's injustice. "All right, then, if that's the way you feel about it! Yes, sir, I'll remove myself from your presence, I'll spare your eyes the sight of this unlucky white tail by which you pull me round all day long. I will leave, sir, I will flee; plenty of other children will console your old age, as my mother lays three times a year. I'll go far away from you to hide my misery. And perhaps" (I added, bursting into tears) "perhaps I'll find, in the neighbouring vegetable garden or in the gutters, a few earthworms and spiders to sustain my miserable life."

"As you please," my father retorted, far from being softened by my outcry. "Do what you like, I don't care if I never see you again. You're no son of mine. You're not a blackbird."

"Please, sir, then what am I?"

"I don't know and I don't care. You're no blackbird."

Uttering these appalling words, my father departed with dignity. My mother got up sadly, and went limping to finish her tears in the platter. Perplexed and desolate, I flew off as best I could. I went, as I had threatened, and perched on the gutter of a roof near by.

II

My father was inhuman enough to leave me in this mortifying situation for several days. In spite of his violence he had a kind heart: I could tell, by glances from the corner of his eye, that he would have been glad to forgive me and call me back. My mother, too, kept looking after me with a sad face and even ventured now and then to give me a frightened little call. But in spite of themselves my loathsome plumage gave them a feeling of disgust and alarm for which there was no cure.

"So I'm not a blackbird?" I kept saying to myself; and indeed, going over my feathers in the morning and looking at myself in a rain-pool in the gutter, I could see only too clearly how little I resembled my family. "Oh heavens," I said again and again, "then tell me what I am!"

One night it was pouring with rain, and I was just going to sleep, worn out with hunger and vexation, when I saw a bird light near me. He was wetter, paler, and thinner than I would have thought possible. He was nearly my own colour, as well as I could judge in the downpour; but he had hardly enough feathers on him to clothe a sparrow, though he was bigger than I. At first I thought him a poor and needy fellow, but in spite of the storm that was buffeting his bald head he kept an air of pride that delighted me. Modestly I made him a low bow; to which he replied by a peck that almost threw me in the bottom of the gutter. I scratched my ear to hide my chagrin, and was withdrawing shamefacedly, without attempting to retaliate.

"Who are you?" he asked, in a voice as hoarse as his pate was naked.

"Indeed, my lord," I said, fearing another blow, "I don't know. I thought I was a blackbird, but they've convinced me that I'm not."

He was interested by the oddity of this reply and my air of sincerity. He came closer and made me tell my story, which I did with the sadness and humility appropriate to my condition and the abominable weather.

"If you were a carrier pigeon, like me," he said when I had finished, "the silly things you're worrying about wouldn't bother you a moment. Our life is to travel. Of course, we have our love affairs, but I know who my father is. To swim through the air, cross great spaces, see mountains and plains at our feet, breathe the blue of the sky itself and not the dead breath of earth, to fly like an arrow to its mark, that is our joy and our existence. I go farther in a day than a man can travel in ten."

"My word, sir," I remarked (a little emboldened), "you are evidently a bohemian."

"That's another thing that doesn't bother me in the least," he replied. "I have no country. I only concern myself with three things: travel, my wife, and my children. Where my wife is, is home."

"But what's that hanging round your neck? It looks like an old curl-paper folded up."

He drew himself up and puffed out his chest.

"Those are papers of great importance. I am on my way to Brussels, taking some information to a famous banker. This will reduce his income seventy-eight per cent."

"Good Heavens!" I cried. "What a fascinating life! And I'm sure that Brussels must be a very interesting town to see. Couldn't you take me with you? Since I'm not a blackbird, perhaps I'm a carrier pigeon!"

"If you were, you'd have returned that peck that I gave you just now."

"Well, sir, I will, I will! Don't let's fall out over such a little thing. Look, the morning's coming and the storm is dying down. Oh, please let me go with you! I am done for, I have nothing left in life: if you refuse me, there's nothing to do but drown myself in this gutter."

"All right, off we go. Follow me if you can."

I gave a last look over the garden where my mother was sleeping. A tear rolled from my eyes; the wind and rain carried it away. I spread my wings and flew.

III

My wings (as I have said) were not yet very strong. My guide sped like the wind, and I panted at his side. I kept even for some time, but soon I felt such a violent stitch that I was near falling.

"Will there be much more like this?" I asked feebly.

"No," he said. "We're at Le Bourget, we haven't more than sixty leagues still to do."

I tried to take courage, not wanting to seem like a wet hen. I flew for a quarter of an hour longer, but then I had to give in.

"If you please, sir," I faltered again, "don't you think we could rest a moment? I'm frightfully thirsty, and if we could perch on a tree. . . ."

"Go to the devil! You're nothing but a blackbird," said the pigeon angrily. And not even deigning to turn his head, he continued his flight in a rage. As for me, deaf and blind with exertion, I fell into a wheatfield.

I don't know how long my swoon lasted. When I came to myself, what I remembered first was the pigeon's parting sneer. "You're nothing but a blackbird," he had said. Oh, my dear parents, I thought; so you were wrong! I shall return home, and you will recognize me as your true and legitimate child, and give me once more my old place in that good little pile of leaves in my mother's nest.

I made an effort to get up; but the fatigue of my journey and the pain caused by my fall paralyzed my limbs. I had hardly risen on my feet, when weakness overcame me, and I fell back on my side.

The awful thought of death was already present in my mind when, among the cornflowers and poppies, I saw two most charming persons approaching on tiptoe. One was a little magpie, most prettily marked and very smartly got up. The other was a rose-coloured dove. The dove paused a few steps away, with a modest air of timidity and compassion for my mishap; the magpie approached gracefully with dainty little hops, really a delightful sight.

"Why, good heavens, my poor boy!" she said, in a gay and silvery voice. "What are you doing here?"

"Alas, Madame la Marquise," I said (for she must have been that at least), "I am a poor devil of a traveller, deserted en route by my postilion, and now in the act of dying of hunger."

"Gracious me, how terrible!" she exclaimed. And at once she began fluttering here and there among the bushes that surrounded us, going hither and thither and bringing any number of berries and small fruits. She made a little pile of them beside me, still continuing her questions.

"But who are you? And where from? What a frightful experience! Where were you going? Travelling alone, and so young? Why, I can see you're only just coming out of your first moult! What are your parents thinking of? Where do they live? How on earth did they let you go in that condition? Why, it's enough to make one's feathers stand up on one's head!"

While she was talking, I had raised myself a little, and ate with appetite. The dove stayed where she was, watching me with the greatest sympathy. But noticing that I moved languidly, she guessed that I was thirsty. Of the rain that had fallen during the night, a drop still remained on a primrose leaf: timidly she spooned it up in her beak and brought it to me, clear and fresh. Certainly, unless I had been so ill, a creature so bashful would never have permitted herself such an unconventional action.

I had never known what love was, but indeed my heart beat violently. Divided between two different emotions, I was entranced by this delicious situation. My stewardess was so merry, my cupbearer so generous and gentle, I would gladly have lunched like that through all eternity Unhappily everything has its end, even the appetite of a convalescent. The meal finished and my strength returned, I satisfied the little magpie's curiosity, telling her my misfortunes with as much candour as I had shown the pigeon the night before. She listened more attentively than I would have thought possible for one of her volatile disposition; the dove, too, gave me charming evidences of deep sympathy. But when I touched on the chief point that caused my grief, that is, my uncertainty of my own species, the magpie interrupted me.

"You must be joking!" she cried. "You, a blackbird? You, a pigeon? Tush, tush! You are a magpie, my dear; a magpie if ever there was one. And a very nice one too," she added, giving me a gentle nudge with her wing, just as one might with a fan.

"But, dear Marquise," I protested, "it seems to me that for a magpie, if you will let me say so, I am rather a queer colour."

"A Russian magpie, dear boy, you are a Russian magpie! Didn't you know that they are white? My poor lad, what simplicity!"

"But, Madam, how can I be Russian, born at the bottom of the Marais, in an old broken platter?"

"Ah, the blessed child! You're one of the invasion, my dear: do you imagine you're the only one? No, no, you trust me and believe what I say. I'm going to take you in hand and show you some of the jolliest things in the world."

"Yes, madam; but where, please?"

"In my green palace, dear boy. You shall see what a time we have! By the time you've been a magpie for a quarter of an hour you won't hear of being anything else. There are a hundred of us there—not those big fat village pies who go begging on the highways, but all of good breeding, fine company, slender and lively, no bigger than a hand. Not one of us has more nor less than seven black markings and five white: we are all like that, and naturally we look down on everyone else. It's true that you haven't got the black markings, but your being Russian will let you in. Our life is made up of two things, cackling and clothes. From morning to noon we dress, from noon to night we cackle. Each of us perches on a tree, the highest and oldest we can find. In the middle of the forest there is an enormous oak—empty, alas! It was the dwelling of the late king, Pie the Tenth. We go there on sorrowful pilgrimage; but apart from this trifling melancholy we have a marvellous time. Our women aren't prudes, nor our husbands jealous; but our pleasures are pure and honest, for our hearts are as noble as our conversation is merry and free. Our pride is unlimited: if a jay or any other plebeian tries to associate with us, we pluck him without mercy. But we're kindhearted people just the same, the sparrows and thrushes and tits that live in our gardens always find us charitable, ready to help and defend them. We cackle more than anyone else, yet nowhere is there less malice. Of course, we have some very religious old dames, who say their prayers all day long; but the sprightliest of our young gossips can pass by the severest old dowager without fearing a peck. In a word, we live for pleasure, for honour, for chatter, for glory—and for clothes."

"It sounds wonderful, madam," I said. "Certainly I should be very foolish to disobey a person of your quality. But, before having the privilege of following you, might I, with your gracious permission, say just a word to this friendly lady here? Mademoiselle" (I continued, turning to the dove), "I beg you to be frank with me. Do *you* believe that I am really a Russian magpie?"

At this question, the dove hung her head and became rosy-pale, like the ribbons of Lolotte.

"Why, sir," she said, "I don't know if I ought——"

"In heaven's name, speak, mademoiselle! I don't mean to be offensive, quite the opposite. Both of you seem to me so delightful that I swear here and now to offer my heart and my claw to whichever will accept them—the very instant I know whether

I am a magpie . . . or something else," I added, speaking more confidentially to the young person. "For when I look at you, I have a queer dovelike feeling that torments me strangely."

"Well, indeed," said the little dove, blushing still more, "I don't know if it's the reflection of the sunshine falling on you across the poppies, but certainly your feathers seem to me to have a faint tinge. . ."

She was too embarrassed to finish.

"Oh perplexity!" I cried. "How shall I know what to believe? How can I give my heart to one of you when it is so desperately divided? Oh Socrates, what an admirable precept of yours, but how difficult to follow—*Know thyself!*"

Since the day when my unlucky ditty had so angered my father, I had never sung. But at this moment it occurred to me to use this means to learn the truth. "Truly," I thought, "since my father put me out of the house at the first verse, the least the second can do is produce some effect on these ladies." I began by bowing politely, as if to ask indulgence for being hoarse after my wetting. First I whistled, then began to warble, to make runs and trills, and finally sang at the top of my lungs, like a Spanish mule-driver in a high wind.

As I sang, the little magpie drew away from me with an air of surprise which soon became positive amazement and then passed into an appearance of alarm and intense indignation. She walked about me in circles, like a cat round a bit of hot meat that has burnt her, but which she still wants to taste again. Seeing the effect of my experiment, and eager to push it to a decision, the more impatience the poor marquise showed the more lustily I carolled. For twenty-five minutes she resisted my melody, but then she could stand it no longer. She flew away in a rage and returned to her palace in the treetops. As for the dove, soon after my concert began she had fallen sound asleep.

Wonderful are the powers of music, I thought. Oh Marais! Oh my maternal nest! More than ever I am determined to return to you.

Just as I was hopping off for my departure the dove opened her eyes.

"Good-bye," she said. "Good-bye, gentle and tedious stranger! My name is Gourouli: don't forget me!"

"Lovely Gourouli," I answered, "you are sweet, kind and charming; I would gladly live and die for you. But you are rose-coloured: so much happiness was not made for me."

IV

The unsuccessful result of my singing did not fail to sadden me. "Alas for music, alas for poetry," I said to myself as I returned toward Paris, "how few there are who understand you!"

Absorbed in my melancholy thoughts, my head suddenly collided with that of a bird flying in the opposite direction. The shock was so violent and unexpected that we both fell into the top of a tree that, fortunately, happened to be beneath us. As we were both a bit shaken, I looked at the stranger, expecting a quarrel. To my surprise he was white. His head was little larger than mine, and on his forehead was a sort of plume which gave him a comically heroic air. Moreover, he carried his tail high, in a very spirited manner; but he did not seem angry. We accosted one another very politely, and made our apologies; after which we entered into conversation. I ventured to ask him his name and country.

"You astonish me," he said. "Is it possible that you do not know me? Aren't you one of us?"

"Indeed, sir," I answered, "I don't know what I am. Everyone asks me that, and tells me the same thing. It must be a wager of some sort."

"You are pleased to joke," he said. "Your plumage is too becoming for me not to recognize a kinsman. Unquestionably you belong to this illustrious old race known in Latin as *cacuata*, in scientific books as *kakatoes*, and in the vulgar tongue—Cockatoo."

"My word, sir, that may be so; it would be a great honour for me. But don't hesitate to act as if it were not so, and be kind enought to tell me to whom I have the pleasure of speaking?"

"I am the great poet Kacatogan. I have made tremendous voyages, my dear sir; desperate wanderings over vast deserts. I didn't begin writing yesterday, I assure you, and my muse has known misfortunes. Yes, sir, I have trilled under Louis XVI, I have bawled for the Republic, sung nobly for the Empire, discreetly praised the Restoration. I have even made an effort in these degenerate days, and have submitted myself (not without difficulty) to the requirements of this tasteless country. I have given the world humorous couplets, sublime hymns, graceful lyrics, pious elegies; long-haired dramas, bobbed-hair romances, periwigged farces and bald tragedies.

In a word, I flatter myself that I have added a few gallant trifles, a few sombre parapets, and a few ingenious ornaments, to the temple of the Muses. What more could you ask? I've grown old at it. But I tell you, dear sir, I still rhyme with all the gusto of youth. Just as you see me, I was in the act of thinking out a poem in one canto (it will be not less than six pages) when you crashed into me. But if I can assist you in any way, I am at your service."

"Truly, my dear sir, you can," I replied. "At this very moment you see me in an awkward poetical embarrassment. I would not dare to say that I am a poet, and certainly not a great poet like yourself" (I made him a low bow), "but Nature has given me a throat which positively itches to sing when I am happy or when I am sad. But to tell you the truth, I am entirely ignorant of the rules."

"I have forgotten them," said Kacatogan. "Don't let that bother you."

"But a most annoying thing keeps happening. When people hear my voice, it causes much the same effect as that of a certain Jean de Nivelle on his . . . you remember the anecdote?"

"Perfectly," said Kacatogan; "and I know this odd effect by my own experience. I am not aware of the reason for it, but the effect is undeniable."

"Ah! Then, my dear sir, you who are evidently the Nestor of poetry, would you not be able to suggest a remedy for this trying state of affairs?"

"I'm afraid not," he said. "For my part, I've never been able to find one. When I was young I used to worry terribly about it: they always hooted me. But now I don't trouble myself. I believe that this prejudice comes from the fact that the public reads others also: that distracts it."

"I agree with you. But you'll admit that it's hard for a well-meaning artist to find his audience taking flight as soon as he begins to get going. I wonder if you would oblige me by listening to me, and telling me your frank opinion?"

"Very willingly," said Kacatogan. "I'm all ears."

I began to sing at once, and had the satisfaction of seeing that Kacatogan neither fled nor fell asleep. He watched me intently, nodding his head now and then as if in approval, with a sort of complimentary murmur. But I soon saw that he was not really listening and was thinking of his own poem. Taking advantage of a moment when I was drawing fresh breath, he suddenly interrupted.

"I've got it, I've got it!" he exclaimed, smiling and wagging his head. "I've got the rhyme I was hunting for! It's the sixty thousand seven hundred and fourteenth that has come out of this very head—and they dare to say that I'm getting old! I'm going to read it to some friends of mine; yes, sir, I'm going to read it to them and we'll see what they say."

With these words he took flight and disappeared. He did not even seem to remember that he had met me.

V

Alone and disappointed once more, there was nothing better to do than make use of the daylight that remained and fly towards Paris. Unfortunately I did not know my way. My journey with the pigeon had been too painful to leave an exact memory of the country. So instead of keeping straight on I turned too far to the left at Le Bourget. Overtaken by nightfall, I had to seek shelter in the woods of Morfontaine.

Everyone was going to bed when I arrived. Magpies and jays, who are the most restless of sleepers, were squabbling on all sides. Sparrows were twittering in the bushes and pushing each other about. At the edge of the water two herons loitered solemnly, perched up on their long stilts, patiently waiting for their wives. Enormous crows, already half alseep, balanced themselves heavily at the very top of the tallest trees and nasally intoned their evening prayers. Lower down, amorous tomtits were still chasing one another through the underbrush, while a distracted woodpecker was pushing his family from behind to make them enter the hollow trunk of a tree. Squadrons of song-sparrows kept arriving from the fields, frolicking in air like puffs of smoke, and entirely covering the sapling on which they alighted. Chaffinches, warblers, robins, clustered lightly on separate branches, like crystals on a chandelier. From every side I could hear voices saying distinctly: "This way, wifie!" "Come, daughter!" "Along here, my dear!" "Right here, ducky!" "Here I am, old thing!" "Good-night, honey!" "So long, folks!" "Sleep well, children!"

What a situation for a bachelor, to have to go to bed in a hotel like that! I was anxious to join some birds of about my own size and beg their hospitality. At night, I reflected, all fowls are grey; and surely it is doing no one any harm to sleep politely beside him?

First I made my way toward a ditch where the starlings were gathering. They were making their evening toilet with great care, and I noticed that most of them had gilded wings and varnished feet: they were the dandies of the forest. They were good enough fellows, and paid no attention to me whatever. But their chatter was so silly, they gossipped so emptily about their annoyances and their good fortunes, and kept rubbing so clumsily against one another that I could not endure it.

I left them and perched on a bough where half a dozen birds of a different species were sitting in a row. Modestly, I took the last place at the end of the branch, hoping they would tolerate my presence. But by bad luck my neighbour was an old dove as withered as a rusty weathercock. At the moment when I approached, the few feathers that still covered her skinny carcass were the object of her solicitude. She was pretending to preen them, but indeed she would have been too much afraid to pull one out: she was merely looking them over to see if they were all still there. I had barely touched her with the tip of my wing, but she drew herself up stiffly.

"What do you think you are doing, sir?" she said, pursing up her beak with almost British prudishness. And giving me a great shove with her elbow she pushed me off with a vigour that would have done credit to a railway porter.

I fell into a briar-bush where a fat hen-pheasant was sleeping. My mother herself, in her platter, never looked so comfortable. So plump, so expansive, so snugly nested on her triple stomach, one would have taken her for a pâté with the piece of toast already eaten. Quietly I slipped beside her. "She'll never wake up," I said to myself; "and even if she does, such a fat motherly old thing can't be very cross." And in fact she wasn't. She half opened her eyes and murmured with a faint sigh: "You're bothering me, darling; move over a bit."

Just then I heard someone calling me: some thrushes, high up in an ash tree, were beckoning me to join them. "Some good-hearted people at last," I thought. They made room for me, laughing like idiots; and I slid into their feathery group as neatly as a love letter into a muff. But it didn't take me long to observe that these ladies had eaten more grapes than were good for them. They could hardly keep their footing on the branches, and their indelicate jokes, screams of laughter and vulgar songs soon forced me to leave.

I was beginning to despair and was about to go off and seek slumber in a solitary corner when a nightingale began singing. Immediately everyone was silent. Ah, how pure a voice! Even his melancholy, how sweet! Far from disturbing the sleep of others, his harmonies seemed to sweeten it. No one dreamed of telling him to be quiet, no one found it disagreeable that he should sing at such an hour; his father did not thrash him nor his friends take flight. "So it is only I," I cried bitterly, "who am forbidden to be happy! Leave, then; fly this cruel world! Better to seek my way among the darkness, at the risk of being devoured by an owl, than to allow myself to be tortured thus by the spectacle of others' happiness!"

With this thought I resumed my way, and wandered long at random. At the first brightness of dawn I perceived the towers of Notre Dame. In the twinkling of an eye I reached them, and looking about soon recognized our garden. I flew thither quicker than lightning. . . . Alas, it was empty. I called my parents—in vain; no one answered. The tree where my father used to sing, my mother's bush, even the dear old platter, all had vanished. The axe had destroyed everything; instead of the green covert where I was born there remained only a cord of firewood.

VI

At first I went hunting for my parents in all the gardens of the neighbourhood, but it was labour lost. Without doubt they had taken refuge in some distant quarter, and I could never learn any further news of them.

Stricken with horrid grief I took up my perch on the same gutter to which my father's anger had first exiled me. There I spent the days and nights bemoaning my wretched existence. I slept no more, I scarcely ate, I was ready to die of misery. One day I was lamenting to myself somewhat as follows, speaking out loud in my despair:

Well, then (I said), I'm not a blackbird, since my father disowned me; nor a pigeon, since I fell by the way when I wanted to fly to Belgium; nor a Russian magpie, since the little Marquise stopped her ears as soon as I opened my beak; nor a dove, since Gourouli, even pretty Gourouli, snored like a monk when I sang; nor a cockatoo, since Kacatogan wouldn't deign to listen to me; nor any kind of bird, indeed, since at Morfontaine they made me go to bed by myself. And yet I have feathers on my body: here are my feet, here are my wings. I am no monster, for Gourouli and even the little Marquise herself found me attractive enough. What strange mystery is it that these feathers, these wings, these feet, cannot form a creature with a name? Can it be that—

But as I was pursuing my grievances I was interrupted by two old women who were arguing in the street below.

"The deuce!" said one to the other. "If you ever succeed in that I'll make you a present of a white blackbird!"

"Just Heaven!" I cried. "That's me! Oh Providence, I am the son of a blackbird and I'm white. I'm a white blackbird!"

This discovery, I must admit, greatly modified my ideas. Instead of continuing to pity myself I began to throw out my chest. I strode proudly along the gutter, looking off into space with a victorious air.

After all it's something to be a white blackbird! I exclaimed. That doesn't happen to everybody! No wonder I was so worried not to find anyone like me—it's the fate of genius! I wanted to fly from the world: well, now I'm going to astonish it. If I am this rare bird whose very existence is denied by the vulgar, I must and intend to bear myself as such. Yes, no less than the Phoenix; and look down on all the rest. I must buy the memoirs of Alfieri and the poems of Lord Byron: these substantial works will inspire me with the necessary egotism, added to that which God has given me. Yes, I wish to add, if possible, to the prestige of my birth. Nature has made me rare, I will make myself mysterious. It will be a favor, a glory, even to see me. Why (I added, more quietly) I might even exhibit myself for money?

No! (I considered) it's an unworthy thought. I'll write a poem, like Kacatogan; not in one canto, but in twenty-four, like all the great men. No, that's not enough: it shall have forty-eight, with notes and an appendix. The universe must learn that I exist. In my verses I will not fail to deplore my isolation; but in such a way that the happiest will envy me. Since Heaven has refused me a mate, I will say the most appalling things about those of others. I will prove that all the grapes are sour except those that *I* eat. Let the nightingales keep on wailing: I will show, as sure as two and two make four, that their melancholy is wearisome and their stuff worthless. I must go and find Charpentier. First of all, I want to make a strong literary position for myself. I intend to have a little coterie of my own, not made up of mere journalists, but real authors and even bluestockings. I'll write a part for Mlle. Rachel; if she refuses to play it I'll publish broadcast that her talent is much inferior to that of some old provincial actress. I'll go to Venice, and rent the Mocenigo Palace on the Grand Canal, in the middle of that fairy city. It costs four francs ten sous a day; there I shall be inspired by all the memories that the author of *Lara* must have left behind him. From the depths of my solitude I will deluge the world with a flood of poems, in the Spenserian meter. Yes, thus I shall solace my great soul, and make all the titmice sigh, all the turtle-doves moan, the snipe melt in tears and the old she-owls yammer. But as far as my own person is concerned, I shall show myself inexorable, inaccessible to love. In vain let them urge and implore me to take pity on the luckless frails maddened by my songs of passion. To all that I shall merely reply, "Stubble!"

Oh summit of glory! My manuscripts will sell for their weight in gold, my first editions will speed overseas, fame and fortune will pursue me everywhere, while I myself remain indifferent to the admiration of the mob. In a word: I shall be the perfect White Blackbird, a true Artistic Temperament—eccentric, fêted, pampered, adored, envied—but completely cross-grained and impossible.

VII

Six weeks later my first work was published.

As I had promised myself, it was a poem in forty-eight cantos. I admit that there were some careless passages, due to the prodigious rapidity with which I wrote it; but I felt certain that the public, accustomed to the serials in the newspapers, would not reproach me.

I enjoyed a success worthy of me: that is to say, unparalleled. The topic of my work was no other than Myself (in that respect I had followed the prevailing fashion of our time). I narrated my past sufferings with an agreeable fatuity, and informed the reader of a thousand absorbing domestic details. The description of my mother's old platter filled not less than fourteen cantos. This was what they call Realism. I enumerated the rough places, the holes, the cracks, the splinters, the rivets, the stains, the various colors, the reflections. I showed the inside of it, the outside, the rim, the bottom, the shape, the elevation, the cross section. Passing to its contents I made an artistic study of the blades of grass, straws, dead leaves, little bits of wood, grains of sand, drops of water, scraps of half-eaten flies, legs of dead beetles. It was gorgeous! But don't imagine that I printed all that in one block: there are impertinent readers who might have skipped it. No; I skilfully parcelled it into bits and mixed them round in the narrative so that none of it was lost. The result was that at the most thrilling and dramatic moment of the action, there arrived unexpectedly fifteen pages of Platter. That, I maintain, is one of the great secrets of art; and as I am not greedy let anyone profit by it who will.

All Europe was stirred by the publication of my book; the whole Continent devoured these intimate revelations that I condescended to impart. How could it have been otherwise? For I enumerated not merely all the facts pertaining to my personal history, but even gave the public a complete picture of all the idle dreams that had gone through my head ever since I was two months old, and inserted (in one of the loftiest passages) an ode I had composed while I was still in the egg. And also, naturally, I didn't neglect to treat, in an offhand way, the great subject that occupies so many people just now, the Future of Humanity. This problem had struck me as worth a word or so, and in a moment of leisure I sketched out a solution that was generally accepted as satisfactory.

Every day I received compliments in verse, letters of congratulation, anonymous declarations of love. In the matter of callers I followed rigidly the plan I had made for myself: my door was closed to everyone. However I could not very well help receiving two strangers who had announced themselves as distant relatives. One was a blackbird from Senegal, the other a blackbird from China.

"Ah, dear sir," they exclaimed, embracing me with enthusiasm, "What a great blackbird you are! How well your immortal poem has depicted the profound miseries of misunderstood genius! Indeed if we were not already as misunderstood as possible, we should want to become so after reading your work. How deeply we appreciate your sufferings and your fine scorn of the crowd. Yes, dear sir, we too have experienced the secret pains of which you have sung. Here are two sonnets we've written: they both deal with the same theme, and we beg you to look kindly on them."

"Gentlemen," I said, "you are evidently great-hearted fellows, spirits who have seen the light. But pardon me if I ask a question. What is the cause of your melancholy?"

"Just look at my figure," the Senegalese replied. "True, my plumage is comely enough and has that nice green brightness that shines on the neck of a duck; but my beak is too short and my foot too large; and just observe my absurd tail. It's a third longer than my whole body. Isn't that a sufficient reason for despair?"

"And my misfortune is even more painful," broke in the Chinese visitor. "My friend's tail draggles on the pavement, but I have none at all. Even the guttersnipes make fun of me as I go by."

"Gentlemen," I said, "I sympathize with you heartily. It is always annoying to have too much or too little of anything. But allow me to remind you that there are a number of persons exactly like yourselves, at the Jardin des Plantes. They have been there a long time, peacefully stuffed. An irregular life isn't all that's necessary to make a literary young woman write a good book, and a blackbird needs something more than discontent to be a genius. I, you see, am the only one of my species: it's my affliction, but also my privilege. Yes, gentlemen, I am white. You become so, and then we shall see what your work amounts to."

VIII

But in spite of my good resolutions and my pretended tranquillity I was not happy. My isolation, though so famous, was not the less painful; it was dreadful to contemplate the probable necessity of spending my whole life as a bachelor. The return of spring, more than anything else, made me terribly restless. I was again beginning to fall into morbid melancholy when an unforeseen episode altered the whole course of my career.

It goes without saying that my writings had crossed the Channel and were all the rage in England. Things they don't understand always cause a sensation among the English. One day I received a letter from

London, signed by a young female blackbird.

"I have read your poem," she wrote, "and it gives me such a thrill that I have decided to offer you my hand and my person. Evidently God has made us for one another! I am like you, I am *white*. . . ."

You can easily imagine my amazement and my joy. A lady blackbird, white! Can it be possible? I asked myself. So then I am no longer solitary on earth! I hastened to reply to the fair unknown, and did so in a vein that sufficiently exhibited my pleasure in her proposal. I urged her to come to Paris or to allow me to fly over to see her. She wrote that she would prefer to come herself because she was bored with her family; that she would put her affairs in order and I should see her shortly.

She arrived, in fact, only a few days later. Oh bliss! she was the prettiest blackbird in the world, and even whiter than I.

I exclaimed with rapture when we met. "Ah, Mademoiselle," I cried—"or rather Madame (for I consider you from this moment as my legitimate spouse)—is it believable that so charming a creature has been alive without her renown apprising me of her existence? Blessed be the sorrows I have borne and the pecks my father gave me, since Heaven was keeping such unhoped consolation in reserve! Until today I feared myself doomed to eternal singleness, and to tell you the truth it was a heavy burden to bear. But looking at you, my dear, I feel in myself all the qualities of a paterfamilias. Accept my hand at once; let's be married in the English manner, without any ceremony, and leave at once for Switzerland."

"I don't see it quite like that," said the young female. "I want our wedding to have some swank about it. All the blackbirds in France who really are anybody ought to be invited. People like us owe it to themselves not to be married like alley-cats. I've brought along plenty of money, so have the invitations engraved, go ahead with your shopping, and don't be stingy with the refreshments."

I adapted myself to her wishes. Our wedding was an affair of inordinate splendour: ten thousand flies were served to the guests. We received the nuptial benediction of the Reverend Archbishop Cormorant, and a magnificent ball ended the day. Finally nothing was lacking in my happiness.

The more I understood the character of my charming bride the more I loved her. She united in her little person all the charms of soul and body. She was perhaps a trifle over-prudish, but this I attributed to the influence of the English fog in which she had lived until then. I did not doubt that the gayer climate of France would soon clear away this small cloud from my horizon.

One thing that bothered me more seriously, however, was the sort of mystery with which my wife sometimes surrounded herself while at her toilet. With singular rigour she would lock herself up with her maid and spend hours in her dressing-room. Husbands are impatient of this sort of foolishness. A score of times I had found myself tapping at her boudoir door without being able to persuade her to admit me. This seemed to me cruelly absurd, and one day I insisted with so much ill humour that she was obliged to open the door, though reproaching my importunity. As I entered I noticed a large bottle full of a sort of white paste. I asked what she was doing with this drug; she said it was cold cream for some chilblains that were bothering her.

I don't care for cosmetics, and this cold cream seemed to me a bit thick; but how could I distrust a creature so gentle and gracious, who had given herself to me with such enthusiasm and perfect sincerity? I had not known at first that my charmer was a penwoman, but presently she admitted it and even showed me the manuscript of a novel in which she had imitated Walter Scott and Scarron simultaneously. I leave you to imagine how pleased I was by this agreeable surprise. I found myself the possessor not merely of matchless loveliness: I knew now that my consort's intelligence was at all points worthy of my own genius. From that time we did our work in company. While I was composing my poems she scribbled reams of copy. I read her my verses aloud, which did not even hinder her from writing at the same time. She hatched her novels with a facility almost equal to my own, always choosing the most melodramatic subjects—parricides, murders, knaveries, rapes; always taking care, incidentally, to attack the government and preach the emancipation of female blackbirds. In a word, no effort was beyond the compass of her ingenuity, no situation was too strong for her modesty. She never needed to erase a line nor to make a plan of the plot before beginning work. She was the perfect type of a literary female.

One day while she was composing with

even more than usual fervour I noticed that she was perspiring profusely, and I was startled to see a large dark stain on her back.

"Good Lord, Blanche!" I exclaimed in alarm. "What's the matter? Are you ill?"

At first she seemed a bit frightened, even speechless; but she soon regained her usual admirable self-command. She told me that it was a blot of ink, and that she was very subject to such accidents in her moments of inspiration.

Can it be that my wife is losing her colour? I asked myself privately.

This thought hindered me from sleeping. The bottle of white paste returned to my mind.

O heaven, I groaned; what a suspicion! Can it be that this adorable creature is only a painting, a mere fresco? Can she have varnished herself to impose upon me? When I believed I was embracing the sister of my soul, the privileged being created specially for me, was I only marrying face powder?

Haunted by this gruesome uncertainty I resolved to settle the matter. I bought a barometer and waited eagerly until it should announce a rainy day. My intention was to take my wife to the country for a picnic, choosing a threatening Sunday, and try the effect of a drenching. But it was mid-July, the weather was relentlessly fine.

My supposed happiness and my habit of writing had greatly sharpened my sensibilities. My emotions were all on edge, and sometimes in my work my sentiment overpowered the idea that caused it and I would burst into tears while waiting for a rhyme. My wife greatly enjoyed these occasions, for evidence of masculine weakness always delights female pride. One evening when I was filing and polishing a phrase (according to the precept of Boileau) my heart opened itself in eloquence.

"Oh my darling!" I said to my cherished Blanche; "Thou, my only and best-beloved, without whom my life were only a dream, whose look and smile change the whole universe for me, Oh life of my life, knowest thou how much I love thee? A little study and patience are sufficient to find the right words for my verses; but how can I ever find those that would express thy beauty? Could even the memory of my past griefs supply a word to tell my present happiness? Before thou wert come to me my solitude was that of an orphan in a strange land; now it is that of a king. In this frail body which I tenant until Death makes rubbish of it, in this fevered brain where useless thought ferments, there is no movement that is not thine. Harken what my brain can say, and feel how great is my passion. Ah, that my genius were a pearl and that thou wert Cleopatra!"

Gibbering thus, I wept upon my wife, and she visibly changed colour. At every great tear that fell from my eyes there appeared a feather—not even black, but of an old rusty red. (I believe that she must have dyed herself previously for some other.) After a few moments of tenderness I found myself face to face with a bird unpainted and unpowdered, identical with the commonest and most insipid of starlings.

What could I do, what could I say, what line could I take? Reproaches would have been absurd. Of course I could have considered the case as justifying an annulment of my marriage; but how could I dare publish my shame? Was not my misery already sufficient? I took my courage in both claws and decided to flee the world, to abandon the career of literature, to escape into the desert and if possible shun for ever after the sight of living creatures. To seek indeed, like Alceste

Un endroit écarté
Où d'être un merle blanc on eût la liberté!

IX

I FLEW, weeping as I went; and the wind, which plays the part of Chance among birds, brought me back to a branch in Morfontaine. This time they were all in bed. What a marriage, I said to myself; what an irony! Certainly I suppose the poor child meant well when she whitewashed herself; but I am not the less to be pitied, nor she less rusty.

Again the nigntingale was singing. Alone in the depth of night he was revelling with full heart in the kindness of God Who has made him above all poets. Freely he was pouring out his ecstasy to the surrounding silence. I could not resist approaching him.

"You lucky bird!" I said to him. "You can sing as much as you like, and enchantingly, and the whole world listens; you have a wife and children, a nest, your friends, a nice mossy pillow, the full moon, and no newspapers. Rubini and Rossini are nothing compared to you: you are as great as they, by sweet instinct. I have been a singer, too, with pitiable results. I have drawn up regiments of words like Prussian infantry, and the effect was mere nonsense. And all this time you were in the woods. I don't suppose one could learn your secret?"

"Yes," answered the nightingale, "but it isn't what you imagine. My wife bores me, I don't love her. I am in love with the rose. Sadi, the Persian, has spoken of our affair. All night long I serenade her—and she is asleep and doesn't even hear me. Her lovely cup is closed now, an old beetle is sleeping with her . . . and tomorrow morning, when I regain my bed, worn with yearning and fatigue, then, then she will open . . . for a bee to eat her heart."

When the Hounds of Spring

By ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

WHEN the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamor of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet!
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

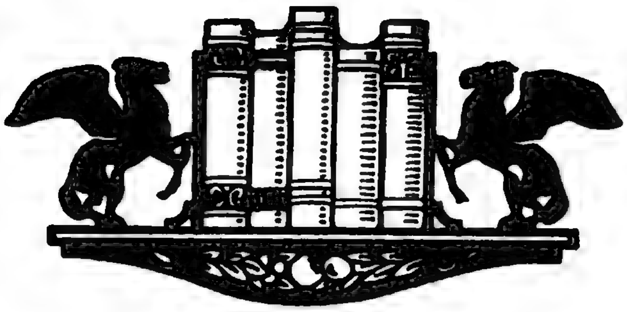
Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins!
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
Ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes
The chesnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Mænad and the Bassarid;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide,
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The gods pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare,
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.



Here and There

On an ocean beach
  A whale was sighing,
And breathed aloud:
  "To love is to suffer." Old Andalusian Song.

AN IRISH PRIEST

I asked her presently if she had heard of a Priest, renowned for his preaching, who had lived in the village forty years before.

"I did, to be sure, though I wasn't only a young girl the same time. He was a great Priest, and after he died, it's what the people said, he went through Purgatory like a flash o' lightning; there wasn't a singe on him. Often me mother told me about a sermon he preached, and I'd remember of a piece of it, and the way you'd say it in English was, 'Oh, black seas of Eternity, without top nor bottom, beginning nor end, bay, brink, nor shore, how can any one look into your depths and neglect the salvation of his soul?'"

E. Œ. Somerville and Martin Ross.

THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA

Two things are wanted by the true man: danger and play. Therefore he seeketh woman as the most dangerous toy. Nietzsche.

A GREEK VERSION OF THE WIDOW'S MITE

Xenophon, the toper, dedicates his empty cask to thee, Bacchus. Receive it kindly for it is all he has. Eratosthenes Scholasticus.

BABU SAYING

We hop about happily in the cage of our ignorance. Blackwood's Magazine.

CHINESE "PIDGIN"

The house-boy's historic reply to his master's enquiry as to what all the row was about: "Butcher kill piggee, piggee no likee." A. M.

THE DANGERS OF THE UMBREL

In hot regions, to avoide the beams of the sunne, in some places (as in Italy) they carry umbrels, or things like a little canopy over their heads, but a learned physician told me, that the use of them was dangerous, because they gather the heate into a pyramidal point, and thence cast it down perpendicularly upon the head, except they know how to carry them for avoyding that danger. FYNES MORRISON (about 1600).

WOMEN AS WITNESSES

Women are considered by some lawyers to make better witnesses than men when testifying to what they have seen, as they are not so apt to mix up their evidence with surmises as to what happened. However, I have often wondered if the women witnesses I was forced to examine really did appreciate the nature of an oath, or if it was only that they did not fear punishment for disregarding it, as much as men do.

There can be no doubt on one point, however. The moment a woman's passions become involved, the moment her love for her husband or her children, or her hatred for a neighbour enters into the question,—not a word she says on any subject should be credited by a jury. FRANCIS L. WELLMAN.

A CERTAIN WOMAN

There are women who inspire one with the desire to woo them and win them; but she makes one wish to die slowly before her steady gaze. BAUDELAIRE.

THE POET'S INVITATION

Shelley once took Jane Williams and her two babies in his coracle and far out into the deep water, when he fell into a long and melancholy reverie, out of which he roused himself to say to her——

"Now let us together solve the great mystery."

Terror gave her wit to remind him quietly that Mary (his wife) would be waiting for them on shore; whereupon he sighed heavily, and took up his paddle again for the unwelcome return journey. MOIRA O'NEILL.

THE PERFECT WIFE

These two were a happy pair. This wayward but generous heart never forgot her offence, and his forgiveness. She gave herself to him, heart and soul, at the altar, and well she redeemed her vow. He rose high in political life: and paid the penalty of that sort of ambition. His heart was often sore. But by his own hearth sat comfort and ever-ready sympathy. Ay, and patient industry to read blue books, and a ready hand and brain to write diplomatic notes for him, off which the mind glided as from a ball of ice.

In thirty years she never once mentioned the servants to him!

O let eternal honor crown her name! CHARLES READE.

AN EXPERT DIVULGES A SECRET

"'Nature or no nature,' says she, 'you take your arm away or I'll tell Bragin, an' he'll alter the nature av your head. Fwhat d'you take me for?' she sez.

"'A woman,' sez I; 'the prettiest in barracks.'

"'A wife,' sez she; 'the straightest in cantonmints!'

"Wid that I dropped my arm, fell back tu paces, an' saluted, for I saw that she mint fwhat she said."

"'Then you know something that some men would give a good deal to be certain of. How could you tell?" I demanded in the interests of Science.

"Watch the hand," said Mulvaney; "av she shuts her hand tight, thumb down over the knuckle, take up your hat an' go. You'll only make a fool ov yourself av you shtay. But av the hand lies opin on the lap, or av you see her thryin' to shut ut, an' she can't,—go on! She's not past reasonin' wid." RUDYARD KIPLING.

An Andalusian Duel

By SERAFIN ESTEBANEZ CALDERON

THROUGH the little square of St. Anna, towards a certain tavern, where the best wine is to be quaffed in Seville, there walked in measured steps two men whose demeanour clearly manifested the soil which gave them birth. He who walked in the middle of the street, taller than the other by about a finger's length, sported with affected carelessness the wide, slouched hat of Ecija, with tassels of glass beads and a ribbon as black as his sins. He wore his cloak gathered under his left arm; the right, emerging from a turquoise lining, exposed the merino lambskin with silver clasps. The herdsman's boot—white, with Turkish buttons,—the breeches gleaming red from below the cloak and covering the knee, and, above all, his strong and robust appearance, dark curly hair, and eye like a red-hot coal, proclaimed at a distance that all this combination belonged to one of those men who put an end to horses between their knees and tire out the bull with their lance.

He walked on, arguing with his companion, who was rather spare than prodigal in his person, but marvellously lithe and supple. The latter was shod with low shoes, garters united the stockings to the light-blue breeches, the waistcoat was canary-coloured, his sash light green, and jaunty shoulder-knots, lappets, and rows of buttons ornamented the carmelite jacket. The open cloak, the hat drawn over his ear, his short clean steps, and the manifestations in all his limbs and movements of agility and elasticity beyond trial plainly showed that in the arena, carmine cloth in hand, he would mock at the most frenzied of Jarama bulls, or the best horned beasts from Utrera.

I—who adore and die for such people, though the compliment be not returned—went slowly in the wake of their worships, and unable to restrain myself, entered with them the same tavern, or rather eating-house, since there they serve certain provocatives as well as wine, and I, as my readers perceive, love to call things by their right name. I entered and sat down at once, and in such a manner as not to interrupt my Oliver and Roland, and that they might not notice me, when I saw that, as if believing themselves alone, they threw their arms with an amicable gesture round each others' neck, and began thus:

"Pulpete," said the taller, "now that we are going to meet each other, knife in hand—you here, I there,—*one, two,—on your guard,—triz traz,—have that,—take this and call it what you like*—let us first drain a tankard to the music of some songs."

"Señor Balbeja," replied Pulpete, drawing his face aside and spitting with the greatest neatness and pulchritude towards his shoe, "I am not the kind of man either for La Gorja or other similar earthly matters, or because a steel tongue is sheathed in my body, or my weasand slit, or for any other such trifle, to be provoked or vexed with such a friend as Balbeja. Let the wine be brought, and then we will sing; and afterwards blood—blood to the hilt."

The order was given, they clinked glasses, and, looking one at the other, sang a Sevillian song.

This done, they threw off their cloaks with an easy grace, and unsheathed their knives with which to prick one another, the one Flemish with a white haft, the other from Guadix, with a guard to the hilt, both blades dazzling in their brightness, and sharpened and ground enough for operating upon cataracts, much less ripping up bellies and bowels. The two had already cleft the air several times with the said lancets, their cloak wound round their left arm—first drawing closer, then back, now more boldly and in bounds—when Pulpete hoisted the flag for parley, and said:

"Balbeja, my friend, I only beg you to do me the favour not to fan my face with *Juilon* your knife, since a slash might use it so ill that my mother who bore me, would not know me, and I should not like to be considered ugly; neither is it right to mar and destroy what God made in His likeness."

"Agreed," replied Balbeja; "I will aim lower."

"Except—except my stomach also, for I was ever a friend to cleanliness, and I should not like to see myself fouled in a bad way, if your knife and arm played havoc with my liver and intestines."

"I will strike higher; but let us go on."

"Take care of my chest, it was always weak."

"Then just tell me, friend, *where* am I to sound or tap you?"

"My dear Balbeja, there's always plenty of time and space to hack at a man: I have here on my left arm a wen, of which you can make meat as much as you like."

"Here goes for it," said Balbeja, and he hurled himself like an arrow; the other warded off the thrust with his cloak, and both, like skilful penmen, began again tracing S's and signatures in the air with dashes and flourishes, without, however, raising a particle of skin.

I do not know what would have been the end of this onslaught, since my venerable, dry, and shriveled person was not suitable for forming a point of exclamation between two combatants; and the tavern-keeper troubled so little about what was happening that he drowned the stamping of their feet and clatter of the tumbling stools and utensils by scraping street music on a guitar as loud as he could. Otherwise he was as calm as if he were entertaining two angels instead of two devils incarnate.

I do not know, I repeat, how this scene would have ended, when there crossed the threshold a personage who came to take a part in the development of the drama. There entered, I say, a woman of twenty to twenty-two years of age, diminutive in body, superlative in audacity and grace. Neat and clean hose and shoes, short, black flounced petticoat, a linked girdle, head-dress or mantilla of fringed taffeta caught together at the nape of her neck, and a corner of it over her shoulder, she passed before my eyes with swaying hips, arms akimbo, and moving her head to and fro as she looked about her on all sides.

Upon seeing her the tavern-keeper dropped his instrument, and I was overtaken by perturbation such as I had not experienced for thirty years (I am, after all, only flesh and blood); but, without halting for such lay-figures, she advanced to the field of battle.

There was a lively to-do here: Don Pulpete and Don Balbeja when they saw Doña Gorja appear, first cause of the disturbance and future prize for the victor, increased their feints, flourishes, curvets, onsets crouching, and bounds—all, however, without touching a hair. Our Helen witnessed in silence for a long time this scene in history with that feminine pleasure which the daughters of Eve enjoy at such critical moments. But gradually her pretty brow clouded over, until, drawing from her delicate ear, not a flower or earring, but the stump of a cigar, she hurled it amidst the jousters. Not even Charles V's cane in the last duel in Spain produced such favourable effects. Both came forward immediately with formal respect, and each, by reason of the discomposure of his person and clothes, presumed to urge a title by which to recommend himself to the fair with the flounces. She, as though pensive, was going over the passage of arms in her mind, and then, with firm and confident resolution, spoke thus:

"And is this affair for me?"

"Who else should it be for? since I—since nobody—" they replied in the same breath.

"Listen, gentlemen," said she. "For females such as I and my parts, of my charms and descent—daughter of La Gatusa, niece of La Méndez, and grand-daughter of La Astrosa—know that there are neither pacts nor compacts, nor any such futile things, nor are any of them worth a farthing. And when men challenge each other, let the knife do its work and the red blood flow, so as not to have my mother's daughter present without giving her the pleasure of snapping her fingers in the face of the other. If you pretend you are fighting for me, it's a lie; you are wholly mistaken, and that not by halves. I love neither of you. Mingalarios of Zafra is to my taste, and he and I look upon you with scorn and contempt. Good-bye, my braves; and, if you like, call my man to account."

She spoke, spat, smoothed the saliva with the point of her shoe, looking Pulpete and Balbeja full in the face, and went out with the same expressive movements with which she entered.

The two unvarnished braggarts followed the valorous Doña Gorja with their eyes; and then with a despicable gesture drew their knives across their sleeves as though wiping off the blood there might have been, sheathed them at one and the same time, and said together:

"Through woman the world was lost, through a woman Spain was lost; but it has never been known, nor do ballads relate, nor the blind beggars sing, nor is it heard in the square or markets, that two valiant men killed each other for another lover."

"Give me that fist, Don Pulpete."

"Your hand, Don Balbeja."

They spoke and strode out into the street, the best friends in the world.

The Siege of Berlin

By ALPHONSE DAUDET

Alph. Daudet

WE ASCENDED the Avenue des Champs Élysées with Doctor V——, reading, upon those walls pierced with shells and sidewalks dug up with grape-shot, the story of the Siege of Paris. Just before we reached the Rondpoint de l'Étoile, the Doctor paused, and pointing out to me one of those great corner-houses which face the Arc de Triomphe with such a pompous air, he said,——

"Do you see those four closed windows up there over the balcony? In the early part of the month of August of last year, that awful month full of storm and disaster, I was summoned to that apartment to attend a severe case of apoplexy. My patient was Colonel Jouve, an old cuirassier of the First Empire. Love of country was his ruling passion, and his mistress was Glory. At the beginning of the war he had taken up quarters in the Champs Élysées in that apartment with the balcony. Do you guess why? That he might witness the triumphal re-entry of our troops. Poor old man! The news of Wissembourg reached his ears just as he was rising from table. He saw the name of Napoleon at the end of that bulletin of defeat, and the sudden shock prostrated him.

"When I reached the old cuirassier, he was stretched at full length upon the carpet of his room. His face gave no signs of life, but it was bleeding as if he had received a tremendous blow upon the head. Standing, he must have presented an imposing figure. As he lay there, he looked like a giant. His features were so noble, his silvery locks curled so thickly, he had such splendid teeth, that this octogenarian looked scarcely more than sixty years of age. Near him knelt his grand-daughter in tears. She resembled him strongly. The sight of both together suggested two beautiful Greek medals struck from the same impression; but one was old and dull, its outlines somewhat worn, while the other was bright and clear-cut, having all the smoothness and brilliancy of a first impression.

"The child's grief touched me. Her grandfather had been a soldier. Her father, too, was a soldier, an officer of MacMahon's staff; and at sight of this stately old hero prostrate, my imagination pictured a scene not less terrible. I did my best to reassure her, but at heart I felt no hope. We had to deal with a severe case of hemiplegia, and at eighty recovery is extremely doubtful. And, in fact, for three days the sick man never rallied from the stupour in which I had found him. Meanwhile news of the battle of Reichshoffen had just reached Paris. You will remember how strangely we were deceived. Until evening we all believed a great victory had been gained, twenty thousand Prussians slain, the prince royal a prisoner. Through some agency scarcely less than miraculous, some echo of the nation's joy must have reached the patient, deaf and dumb though he was, some magnetic current must have penetrated even that paralyzed frame, for that evening, when I approached his bedside, I saw that he was a new man. His eye was clear almost, his tongue no longer thick. He was able to smile, and twice he stammered 'Vic-to-ry!'

"'Yes, colonel, a great victory!'

"And as I acquainted him with the details of MacMahon's glorious success, his features relaxed, his face brightened.

"As I was about to leave the apartment, I found the young girl waiting for me. She was weeping. 'But he is out of danger!' I said, taking her hands in mine.

"The unhappy child scarcely ventured a reply. The bulletins had just announced the true story of Reichshoffen. MacMahon was retreating, the army cut to pieces. Our eyes could not conceal the consternation both felt. The child was heartbroken. She was thinking of her father. But I trembled at thought of the old man. Surely he could not survive this fresh shock. But what should we do? Leave him to enjoy that happiness, those illusions which had breathed new life into him? But in that case we must feed him upon lies. 'Very well, I will lie to him!' said the young heroine, quickly drying her eyes, and her face was wreathed in smiles when she returned to her grandfather's chamber.

"She had undertaken no light task. During the first days it was not so difficult a matter, for the good man's head was very weak, and he was as easily deceived as a child. But as health returned, his ideas grew clearer. It was necessary to keep him informed of the movement of the various armies, and to manufacture military bulletins for him. And it was truly pitiable to see that lovely child buried night and day in a map of Germany, pinning tiny flags upon it, endeavouring to invent the details of a glorious campaign. Bazaine had advanced upon Berlin, Froissart was in Bavaria, MacMahon on the Baltic! Sometimes she consulted me, and I aided her as far as I could, but in carrying out this imaginary invasion no one rendered us greater assistance than the grandfather himself. He had conquered Germany so many times during the First Empire! He knew every move in advance. 'This is where they will go next!' 'This will be their next move,' he would say; and his anticipations never failing to prove themselves correct, he took not a little pride in them.

"'But, alas! to no avail did we take cities, win battles. We did not move rapidly enough to suit him. That old man was simply insatiable. Every day I visited him I heard news of some fresh exploit.

"'Doctor, we have taken Mayence,' said the young girl, advancing towards me with a heartrending smile, and through the door I heard a joyous voice exclaiming, 'We move! we move! in a week more we shall enter Berlin.'

"As a matter of fact, the Prussians would reach Paris in another week. We asked ourselves at first whether it would not be better to remove our patient from the city, but, once outside of Paris, the condition of France would have told him all; moreover, he was too weak, too much benumbed from the effect of the first shock, to learn the truth then. It was decided to remain.

"The first day of the investment of the city, I climbed up to my patient's apartment. Well I remember that day! My heart was heavy, full of anguish. For the gates of Paris were closed, the enemy under her very walls, and even her outskirts converted into frontiers. I found the ingenuous old man sitting up in bed, proud and jubilant.

"'Well,' he said, 'at last the *siege* has begun!'

"I looked at him; I was stunned. 'Why, colonel,' I asked, 'how do you know that?'

"His grand-daughter glanced in my direction.

"'Oh, yes, doctor; this is great news! The siege of Berlin has begun.'

"And as she spoke, she plied her needle with a little affectation of composure. How should he suspect anything? Though the cannons were firing from the forts, he could not hear them. And although unhappy Paris was turned upside down, and filled with gloom and forebodings, he saw nothing of it all. But where he lay, he could get a glimpse of the Arc de Triomphe, and his chamber was filled with bric-à-brac of the First Empire, admirably fitted to nourish his illusions. Portraits of marshals were there, engravings of battles; there was a picture of the *King of Rome* in baby robes. There were tall, stiff consoles ornamented with trophied brass, and loaded with imperial relics, medallions, bronzes; there was a bit of the rock of St. Helena under a glass globe; there were numerous miniatures always representing the same lady, in ballroom costume, in a yellow robe with leg-of-mutton sleeves, a pair of bright eyes glancing from beneath her carefully curled locks.

"All these ornaments, the King of Rome, the marshals, the yellow ladies, those short-waisted, high-girdled figures whose stiff and artificial lines were considered the very embodiment of grace in 1806—gallant colonel!—it was such things as those, it was that atmosphere of victory and conquest, which, far more than any words of ours, made him accept the story of the siege of Berlin with such childlike simplicity.

"From that day, our military operations were far less complex. To take Berlin was simply a question of patience. From time to time, when the old man grew weary of waiting, we would read him a letter from his son; of course, an imaginary letter, for Paris was cut off from the outer world then, and, besides, since the battle of Sedan, MacMahon's aide-de-camp was confined in a German fortress. You may imagine that poor child's despair, living from day to day with no news of her father, but knowing that he was a prisoner, deprived of everything, sick, perhaps,—imagine her agony knowing all this, but compelled to speak for him, to invent such joyous epistles in his behalf, a trifle brief, perhaps, but the brevity of a soldier in the field, who answers his country's cry, 'Forward!' and sees her arms everywhere victorious. Sometimes she had not the heart for these letters, and then weeks passed without news. But the old man would grow restless and could not sleep. Then a letter would at once arrive from Germany, and she would read it gayly at his bedside, repressing her tears. The colonel always listened religiously, with a very wise air; he approved, criticized, explained to us here and there a passage which seemed slightly obscure. But his finest efforts were replies he sent his son. 'Never forget that you are a Frenchman,' he would say. 'Be generous to these poor people. Invade their country, but not as an oppressor.' Then followed suggestions without end, delightful twaddle concerning a right observance of propriety, and what constituted courtesy towards women,—in short, a whole military code for the guidance of these *conquerors;* he added some reflections upon politics in general, and outlined the conditions of peace which must be imposed upon the vanquished. I must add that, as regards the last subject, his demands were not severe.

"'A war indemnity, only that; what good would it do to seize their provinces? A France could never be made out of Germany!'

"He dictated these words with a steady voice, with such candour, and such noble faith in his country, that it was impossible to listen to him unmoved.

"And all the while the siege was progressing, not, alas! that of Berlin. There were days of severe cold, of bombardment, of epidemics and famine. But, thanks to our cares, our efforts, and all those proofs of indefatigable tenderness which were multiplied about him, the old man never felt a moment's anxiety. To the very end I was able to obtain white bread and fresh meat for him. Of course, there was none for anyone else, and you cannot imagine anything more touching than this grandfather's breakfasts, of which he partook with such innocent egotism, the old man sitting up in bed, fresh and smiling, his napkin under his chin, the grand-daughter ever at his side, her pale face revealing the privation she had suffered; she guided his hands, compelled him to drink, aided him as he ate all the good things saved specially for him. Enlivened by his repast, enjoying the comfort of his warm chamber while the cold winter wind blew without, and the snow whirled about his windows, the aged cuirassier would recall his campaigns in the North and related to us for the hundredth time the tale of that mournful retreat from Moscow, when there was no other food than frozen biscuit and horse-flesh.

"'Do you know what that means, child? We ate horse-flesh!' I think she understood perfectly. She had been eating no other meat for two months. From day to day, as convalescence approached, the patient began to make our task a more difficult one. That lethargy of all his senses, of all his limbs, had aided us up to this time, but was beginning to leave him. Several times those terrible volleys from the Porte Maillot made him start suddenly, his ear as alert as a hound's: we were obliged to invent a final victory for Bazaine before Berlin, and to explain that the salutes in front of Les Invalides were in honour of the event. Another day, when we had pushed his bed close to the window, I think it was the Thursday the battle of Buzenval occurred, he saw the National Guard quite distinctly as it formed in front of the Avenue de la Grande Armée.

"'What troops are those?' asked our colonel, and we heard him mutter to himself,——

"'Badly drilled! badly drilled!'

"Nothing came of this incident, but we realized that it now behooved us to take greater precautions than before. Unfortunately we were not cautious enough.

"One evening on my arrival, the child came to me, her face full of anxiety.

"'Tomorrow they enter,' she said.

"Was the door of the grandfather's room ajar? I do remember, and have often thought in recalling that evening, that his features wore an unusual expression. It is very likely that he had heard what we were saying. But we were speaking of the Prussians, and he was thinking of the French army, and of that triumphal entry he had been expecting for many a day,—MacMahon descending the avenue to martial music, along a path strewn with flowers, his son at the Marshal's side, and there upon the balcony, the old warrior himself in full uniform, as upon the field of Lutzen, saluting the flags that had many a rent in them, and our eagles blackened with powder.

"Poor Father Jouve! Doubtless he fancied we would not permit him to assist at that entry of our troops, anxious to spare him the excitement of so great an event. For he said nothing to anyone, but the following day, just at the hour when the

Prussians advanced somewhat timidly upon the long avenue leading from the Porte Maillot to the Tuileries, an upper window opened softly, and the colonel himself appeared upon the balcony, wearing his helmet, his long cavalry sword, and all the antiquated but glorious toggery of an old cuirassier of Milhaud. I still ask myself what tremendous effort of his will, what sudden start of life, had put him on his feet again, and in all his war trappings. But one fact is certain. There he stood upon the balcony, amazed to find the avenue so wide and still, the blinds of the houses closed, and Paris itself as gloomy as a vast lazaretto, flags everywhere, but strangely enough, only white flags with red crosses, and no one to meet our soldiers.

"For a moment he must have believed he had made a mistake,—but, no! yonder, behind the Arc de Triomphe, issued an indistinct rattle, a black line advanced steadily into the morning light. Then by degrees the tops of helmets could be seen flashing in the sunlight, and the drums of Jena began to beat. And then beneath the Arc de l'Étoile, accented by the rhythmic tramp of the regiments and the clashing of sabres, resounded the strains of Schubert's triumphal march.

"Then through the dismal silence of the place was heard an awful cry, 'To arms! to arms! the Prussians!' and the four uhlans of the advance-guard, looking towards the balcony above, could see the majestic figure of an old man reeling, his arms outstretched. He fell heavily. This time the shock had indeed proved fatal. Colonel Jouve was dead."

The Fable of the Slim Girl Who Tried to Keep a Date That Was Never Made

By GEORGE ADE

ONCE upon a Time there was a slim Girl with a Forehead which was Shiny and Protuberant, like a Bartlett Pear. When asked to put Something in an Autograph Album she invariably wrote the Following, in a tall, dislocated Back-Hand:

"Life is Real: Life is Earnest,
And the Grave is not its Goal."

That's the kind of a Girl she was.

In her own Town she had the Name of being a Cold Proposition, but that was because the Primitive Yokels of a One-Night Stand could not Attune Themselves to the Views of one who was troubled with Ideals. Her Soul Panted for the Higher Life.

Alas, the Rube Town in which she Hung Forth was given over to Croquet, Mush and Milk Sociables, a lodge of Elks and two married Preachers who doctored for the Tonsilitis. So what could the Poor Girl do?

In all the Country around there was not a Man who came up to her Plans and Specifications for a Husband. Neither was there any Man who had any time for Her. So she led a lonely Life, dreaming of the One—the Ideal. He was a big and pensive Literary Man wearing a Prince Albert coat, a neat Derby Hat and godlike Whiskers. When He came he would enfold Her in his Arms and whisper Emerson's Essays to her.

But the Party failed to show up.

Often enough she put on her Chip Hat and her Black Lisle Gloves and Sauntered down to look at the Gang sitting in front of the Occidental Hotel, hoping that the Real Thing would be there. But she always saw the same old line of Four-Flush Drummers from Chicago and St. Louis, smoking Horrid Cigars and talking about the Percentages of the League Teams.

She knew that these Gross Creatures were not prone to chase mere Intellectual Splendor, so she made no effort to Flag them.

When she was Thirty-Four years of age and was able to recite "Lucile" without looking at the Book she was Married to a Janitor of the name of Ernest. He had been kicked in the Head by a Mule when young and believed everything he read in the Sunday Papers. His pay was Twenty-Three a month, which was high, if you knew Ernest.

His Wife wore a red Mother Hubbard all during the Remainder of her Life.

This is invariably a Sign of Blasted Hopes.

MORAL: *Never Live in a Jay Town.*

Miss Gunton of Poughkeepsie

By HENRY JAMES

Henry James

"IT'S ASTONISHING what you take for granted!" Lady Champer had exclaimed to her young friend at an early stage; and this might have served as a sign that even then the little plot had begun to thicken. The reflection was uttered at the time the outlook of the charming American girl in whom she found herself so interested was still much in the rough. They had often met, with pleasure to each, during a winter spent in Rome; and Lily had come to her in London towards the end of May with further news of a situation the dawn of which, in March and April, by the Tiber, the Arno, and the Seine, had considerably engaged her attention. The Prince had followed Miss Gunton to Florence and then with almost equal promptitude to Paris, where it was both clear and comical for Lady Champer that the rigour of his uncertainty as to parental commands and remittances now detained him. This shrewd woman promised herself not a little amusement from her view of the possibilities of the case. Lily was on the whole showing a wonder; therefore the drama would lose nothing from her character, her temper, her tone. She was waiting—this was the truth she had imparted to her clever protectress—to see if her Roman captive would find himself drawn to London. Should he really turn up there she would the next thing start for America, putting him to the test of that wider range and declining to place her confidence till he should have arrived in New York at her heels. If he remained in Paris or returned to Rome she would stay in London and, as she phrased it, have a good time by herself. Did he expect her to go back to Paris for him? Why not in that case just as well go back to Rome at once? The first thing for her, Lily intimated to her London adviser, was to show what, in her position, *she* expected.

Her position meanwhile was one that Lady Champer, try as she would, had as yet succeeded neither in understanding nor in resigning herself not to understand. It was that of being extraordinarily pretty, amazingly free, and perplexingly good, and of presenting these advantages in a positively golden light. How was one to estimate a girl whose nearest approach to a drawback—that is, to an encumbrance—appeared to be a grandfather carrying on a business in an American city, her ladyship had never otherwise heard of, with whom communication was all by cable and on the subject of "drawing"? Expression was on the old man's part moreover as concise as it was expensive, consisting as it inveterately did of but the single word "Draw." Lily drew, on every occasion in life, and it at least could not be said of the pair—when the "family idea," as embodied in America, was exposed to criticism—that they were not in touch. Mr. Gunton had given her further Mrs. Brine, to come out with her, and with this provision and the perpetual pecuniary he plainly figured—to Lily's own mind—as solicitous to the point of anxiety. Mrs. Brine's scheme of relations seemed in truth to be simpler still. There was a transatlantic "Mr. Brine," of whom she often spoke—and never in any other way; but she wrote for newspapers; she prowled in catacombs, visiting more than once even those of Paris; she haunted hotels; she picked up compatriots; she spoke above all a language that often baffled comprehension. She mattered, however, but little; she was mainly so occupied in having what Lily had likewise independently glanced at—a good time by herself. It was difficult enough indeed to Lady Champer to see the wonderful girl reduced to that, yet she was a little person who kept one somehow in presence of the incalculable. Old measures and familiar rules were of no use at all with her—she had so broken the moulds and so mixed the marks. What was confounding was her disparities—the juxtaposition in her of beautiful sun-flushed heights and deep dark holes. She had none of the things that the other things implied. She dangled in the air in a manner that made one dizzy; though one took comfort, at the worst, in feeling that one was there to catch her if she fell. Falling, at the same time, appeared scarce one of her properties, and it was positive for Lady Champer at moments that if one held out one's arms one might be, after all, much more likely to be pulled up. That was really a part of the excitement of the acquaintance.

"Well," said this friend and critic on one of the first of the London days, "say he does, on your return to your own country, go after you: how do you read, on that occurrence, the course of events?"

"Why, if he comes after me I'll have him."

"And do you think it so easy to 'have' him?"

Lily appeared, lovely and candid,—and it was an air and a way she often had,—to wonder what she thought. "I don't know that I think it any easier than he seems to think it to have *me*. I know moreover that, though he wants awfully to see the country, he wouldn't just now come to America unless to marry me; and if I take him at all," she pursued, "I want first to be able to show him to the girls."

"Why 'first'?" Lady Champer asked. "Wouldn't it do as well last?"

"Oh, I should want them to see me in Rome, too," said Lily. "But, dear me, I'm afraid I want a good many things! What I most want of course is that he should show me unmistakably what *he* wants. Unless he wants me more than anything else in the world, I don't want him. Besides, I hope he doesn't think I'm going to be married anywhere but in my own place."

"I see," said Lady Champer. "It's for your wedding you want the girls. And it's for the girls you want the Prince."

"Well, we're all bound by that promise. And of course *you*'ll come!"

"Ah, my dear child——!" Lady Champer gasped.

"You can come with the old Princess. You'll be just the right company for her."

The elder friend considered afresh, with depth, the younger's beauty and serenity. "You *are*, love, beyond everything!"

The beauty and serenity took on for a moment a graver cast. "Why do you so often say that to me?"

"Because you so often make it the only thing to say. But you'll some day find out why," Lady Champer added with an intention of encouragement.

Lily Gunton, however, was a young person to whom encouragement looked queer; she had grown up without need of it, and it seemed indeed scarce required in her situation. "Do you mean you believe his mother won't come?"

"Over mountains and seas to see you married?—and to be seen also of the girls? If she does, *I* will. But we had perhaps better," Lady Champer wound up, "not count our chickens before they're hatched." To which, with one of the easy returns of gaiety that were irresistible in her, Lily made answer that neither of the ladies in question struck her quite as chickens.

The Prince at all events presented himself in London with a promptitude that contributed to make the warning gratuitous. Nothing could have exceeded, by this time, Lady Champer's appreciation of her young friend, whose merits "town" at the beginning of June threw into renewed relief; but she had the imagination of greatness and, though she believed she tactfully kept it to herself, she thought what the young man had thus done a great deal for a Roman prince to do. Take him as he was, with the circumstances—and they were certainly peculiar, and he was charming—it was a far cry for him from Piazza Colonna to Clarges Street. If Lady Champer had the imagination of greatness, which the Prince in all sorts of ways gratified, Miss Gunton of Poughkeepsie—it was vain to pretend the contrary—was not great in any particular save one. She was great when she "drew." It was true that at the beginning of June she did draw with unprecedented energy and in a manner that, though Mrs. Brine's remarkable nerve apparently could stand it, fairly made a poor baronet's widow, little as it was her business, hold her breath. It was none of her business at all, yet she talked of it even with the Prince himself—to whom it was indeed a favourite subject and whose greatness, oddly enough, never appeared to shrink in the effect it produced upon him. The line they took together was that of wondering if the scale of Lily's drafts made really most for the presumption that the capital at her disposal was rapidly dwindling, or for that of its being practically infinite. "Many a fellow," the young man smiled, "would marry her to pull her up." He was, in any case, of the opinion that it was an occasion for deciding—one way or the other—quickly. Well, he did decide—so quickly that, within the week, Lily communicated to her friend that he had offered her his hand, his heart, his fortune, and all his titles, grandeurs, and appurtenances. She had given him his answer, and he was in bliss; though nothing, as yet, was settled but that.

Tall, fair, active, educated, amiable, simple, carrying so naturally his great name and pronouncing so kindly Lily's small one, the happy youth, if he was one of the most ancient of princes, was one of the most modern of Romans. This second character it was his special aim and pride to cultivate. He would have been pained at feeling himself an hour behind his age; and he had a way—both touching and amusing to some observers—of constantly comparing his watch with the dial of the day's news. It was in fact easy to see that in deciding to ally himself with a young alien of vague origin, whose striking beauty was reinforced only by her presumptive money, he had even put forward a little the fine hands of his timepiece. No one else, however,—not even Lady Champer, and least of all Lily herself,—had quite taken the measure, in this connection, of his merit. The quick decision he had spoken of was really a flying leap. He desired incontestably to rescue Miss Gunton's remainder; but to rescue it he had to take it for granted, and taking it for granted was nothing less than—at whatever angle considered—a risk. He never, naturally, used the word to her, but he distinctly faced a peril. The sense of what he had staked on a vague return gave him, at the height of the London season, bad nights, or rather bad mornings—for he danced with his intended, as a usual thing, conspicuously, till dawn—besides obliging him to take, in the form of long explanatory, argumentative, and persuasive letters to his mother and sisters, his uncles, aunts, cousins, and preferred confidants, large measures of justification at home. The family sense was strong in his huge old house, just as the family array was numerous; he was dutifully conscious of the trust reposed in him, and moved from morning till night, he perfectly knew, as the observed of a phalanx of observers; whereby he the more admired himself for his passion, precipitation, and courage. He had only a probability to go upon, but he was—and by the romantic tradition of his race—so in love that he should surely not be taken in.

His private agitation of course deepened when, to do honour to her engagement and as if she would have been ashamed to do less, Lily "drew" again most gloriously; but he managed to smile beautifully on her asking him if he didn't want her to be splendid, and at his worst hours he went no further than to wish that he might be married on the morrow. Unless it were the next day, or at most the next month, it really at moments seemed best that it should never be at all. On the most favourable view—with the solidity of the residuum fully assumed—there were still minor questions and dangers. A vast America, arching over his nuptials, bristling with expectant bridesmaids and underlaying their feet with expensive flowers, stared him in the face and prompted him to the reflection that if she dipped so deep into the mere remote overflow her dive into the fount itself would verily be a header. If she drew at such a rate in London how wouldn't she draw at Poughkeepsie? he asked himself, and practically asked Lady Champer; yet bore the strain of the question, without an answer, so nobly that when, with small delay, Poughkeepsie seemed simply to heave with reassurances, he regarded the ground as firm and his tact as rewarded. "And now at last, dearest," he said, "since everything's so satisfactory, you *will* write?" He put it appealingly, endearingly, yet as if he could scarce doubt.

"Write, love? Why," she replied, "I've done nothing *but* write! I've written ninety letters."

"But not to mamma," he smiled.

"Mamma?"—she stared. "My dear boy, I've not at this time of day to remind you that I've the misfortune to have no mother. I lost mamma, you know, as you lost your father, in childhood. You may be sure," said Lily Gunton, "that I wouldn't otherwise have waited for you to prompt me."

There came into his face a kind of amiable convulsion. "Of course, darling, I remember—your beautiful mother (she *must* have been beautiful!) whom I should have been so glad to know. I was thinking of *my* mamma—who'll be so delighted to hear from you." The Prince spoke English in perfection—had lived in it from the cradle and appeared, particularly when alluding to his home and family, to matters familiar and of fact, or to those of dress and sport, of general recreation, to draw such a comfort from it as made the girl think of him as scarce more a foreigner than a pleasant, auburn, slightly awkward, slightly slangy, and extremely well-tailored young Briton would have been. He sounded "mamma" like a rosy English schoolboy; yet just then, for the first time, the things with which he was connected struck her as in a manner strange and far-off. Everything in him, none the less—face and voice and tact, above all his deep desire—laboured to bring them near and make them natural. This was intensely the case as he went on: "Such a little letter as you *might* send would really be awfully jolly."

"My dear child," Lily replied on quick reflection, "I'll write to her with joy the minute I hear from her. Won't she write to *me?*"

The Prince just visibly flushed. "In a moment if you'll only——"

"Write to her first?"

"Just pay her a little—no matter how little—your respects."

His attenuation of the degree showed perhaps a sense of a weakness of position; yet it was no perception of this that made the girl immediately say: "Oh, *caro*, I don't think I can begin. If you feel that *she* won't—as you evidently do—is it because you've asked her and she has refused?" The next moment, "I see you *have!*" she exclaimed. His rejoinder to this was to catch her in his arms, to press his cheek to hers, to murmur a flood of tender words in which contradiction, confession, supplication, and remonstrance were oddly confounded; but after he had sufficiently disengaged her to allow her to speak again, his effusion was checked by what came. "Do you really mean you can't induce her?" It renewed itself on the first return of ease; or it, more correctly perhaps, in order to renew itself, took this return—a trifle too soon—for granted. Singular, for the hour, was the quickness with which ease could leave them—so blissfully at one as they were; and, to be brief, it had not come back even when Lily spoke of the matter to Lady Champer. It is true that she waited but little to do so. She then went straight to the point. "What would you do if his mother doesn't write?"

"The old Princess—to *you?*" Her ladyship had not had time to mount guard in advance over the tone of this, which was doubtless (as she instantly, for that matter, herself became aware) a little too much that of "Have you really expected she would?" What Lily had expected found itself therefore not unassisted to come out—and came out indeed to such a tune that with all kindness, but with a melancholy deeper than any she had ever yet in the general connection used, Lady Champer was moved to remark that the situation might have been found more possible had a little more historic sense been brought to it. "You're the dearest thing in the world, and I can't imagine a girl's carrying herself in any way, in a difficult position, better than you do; only I'm bound to say I think you ought to remember that you're entering a very great house, of tremendous antiquity, fairly groaning under the weight of ancient honours, the heads of which—through the tradition of the great part they've played in the world—are accustomed to a great deal of deference. The old Princess, my dear, you see"—her ladyship gathered confidence a little as she went—"is a most prodigious personage."

"Why, Lady Champer, of course she is, and that's just what I like her for!" said Lily Gunton.

"She has never in her whole life made an advance, any more than anyone has ever dreamed of expecting it of her. It's a pity that while you were there you didn't see her, for I think it would have helped you to understand. However, as you did see his sisters, the two Duchesses and dear little Donna Claudia, you know how charming they all *can* be. They only want to be nice, I know, and I dare say that on the smallest opportunity you'll hear from the Duchesses."

The plural had a sound of splendour, but Lily quite kept her head. "What do you call an opportunity? Am I not giving them, by accepting their son and brother, the best—and in fact the only—opportunity they could desire?"

"I like the way, darling," Lady Champer smiled, "you talk about 'accepting'!"

Lily thought of this—she thought of everything. "Well, say it would have been a better one still for them if I had refused him."

Her friend caught her up. "But you haven't."

"Then they must make the most of the occasion as it is." Lily was very sweet, but very lucid. "The Duchesses may write or not, as they like; but I'm afraid the Princess simply *must*." She hesitated, but after a moment went on: "He oughtn't to be willing moreover that I shouldn't expect to be welcomed."

"He isn't!" Lady Champer blurted out.

Lily jumped at it. "Then he has told you? It's her attitude?"

She had spoken without passion, but her friend was scarce the less frightened. "My poor child, what can he do?"

Lily saw perfectly. "He can make her."

Lady Champer turned it over, but her fears were what was clearest. "And if he doesn't?"

"If he 'doesn't'?" The girl ambiguously echoed it.

"I mean if he can't."

Well, Lily, more cheerfully, declined, for the hour, to consider this. He would certainly do for her what was right; so that after all, though she had herself put the question, she disclaimed the idea that an answer was urgent. There was time, she conveyed—which Lady Champer only desired to believe; a faith moreover somewhat shaken in the latter when the Prince entered her room the next day with the information that there was none—none at least to leave everything in the air. Lady Champer had not yet made up her mind as to which of these young persons she liked most to draw into confidence, nor as to whether she most inclined to take the Roman side with the American or the American side with the Roman. But now in truth she was settled; she gave proof of it in the increased lucidity with which she spoke for Lily.

"Wouldn't the Princess depart—a—from her usual attitude for such a great occasion?"

The difficulty was a little that the young man so well understood his mother. "The devil of it is, you see, that it's for Lily herself, so much more, she thinks the occasion great."

Lady Champer mused. "If you hadn't her consent I could understand it. But from the moment she thinks the girl good enough for you to marry——"

"Ah, she doesn't!" the Prince gloomily interposed. "However," he explained, "she accepts her because there are reasons—my own feeling, now so my very life, don't you see? But it isn't quite open arms. All the same, as I tell Lily, the arms *would* open."

"If she'd make the first step? Hum!" said Lady Champer, not without the note of grimness. "She'll be obstinate."

The young man, with a melancholy eye, quite coincided. "She'll be obstinate."

"So that I strongly recommend you to manage it," his friend went on after a pause. "It strikes me that if the Princess can't do it for Lily she might at least do it for you. Any girl you marry becomes thereby somebody."

"Of course—doesn't she? She certainly ought to do it for *me*. I'm after all the head of the house."

"Well, then, make her!" said Lady Champer a little impatiently.

"I will. Mamma adores me, and I adore *her*."

"And you adore Lily, and Lily adores you—therefore everybody adores everybody, especially as I adore you both. With so much adoration all round, therefore, things ought to march."

"They shall!" the young man declared with spirit. "I adore you, too—you don't mention that; for you help me immensely. But what do you suppose she'll do if she doesn't?"

The agitation already visible in him ministered a little to vagueness; but his friend after an instant disembroiled it. "What do I suppose Lily will do if your mother remains stiff?" Lady Champer faltered, but she let him have it. "She'll break."

His wondering eyes became strange. "Just for that?"

"You may certainly say it isn't much—when people love as you do."

"Ah, I'm afraid then Lily doesn't!"—and he turned away in his trouble.

She watched him while he moved, not speaking for a minute. "My dear young man, are you afraid of your mamma?"

He faced short about again. "I'm afraid of this—that if she does do it she won't forgive her. She *will* do it—yes. But Lily will be for her, in consequence, ever after, the person who had made her submit herself. She'll hate her for that—and then she'll hate me for being concerned in it." The Prince presented it all with clearness—almost with charm. "What do you say to that?"

His friend had to think. "Well, only, I fear, that we belong, Lily and I, to a race unaccustomed to counting with such passions. Let her hate!" she, however, a trifle inconsistently wound up.

"But I love her so!"

"Which?" Lady Champer asked it

almost ungraciously; in such a tone at any rate that, seated on the sofa with his elbows on his knees, his much-ringed hands nervously locked together and his eyes of distress wide open, he met her with visible surprise. What she met *him* with is perhaps best noted by the fact that after a minute of it his hands covered his bent face and she became aware she had drawn tears. This produced such regret in her that before they parted she did what she could to attenuate and explain—making a great point, at all events, of her rule, with Lily, of putting only his own side of the case. "I insist awfully, you know, on your greatness!"

He jumped up, wincing. "Oh, that's horrid."

"I don't know. Whose fault is it, then, at any rate, if trying to help you may have that side?" This was a question that, with the tangle he had already to unwind, only added a twist; yet she went on as if positively to add another. "Why on earth don't you, all of you, leave them alone?"

"Leave them——?"

"All your Americans."

"Don't you like them then—the women?"

She hesitated. "No. Yes. They're an interest. But they're a nuisance. It's a question, very certainly, if they're worth the trouble they give."

This at least it seemed he could take in. "You mean that one should be quite sure first what they *are* worth?"

He made her laugh now. "It would appear that you never *can* be. But also really that you can't keep your hands off."

He fixed the social scene an instant with his heavy eye. "Yes. Doesn't it?"

"However," she pursued as if he again a little irritated her, "Lily's position is quite simple."

"Quite. She just loves me."

"I mean simple for herself. She really makes no differences. It's only we—you and I—who make them all."

The Prince wondered. "But she tells me she delights in us; has, that is, such a sense of what we are supposed to 'represent.'"

"Oh, she *thinks* she has. Americans think they have all sorts of things; but they haven't. That's just *it*"—Lady Champer was philosophic. "Nothing but their Americanism. If you marry anything, you marry that; and if your mother accepts anything that's what she accepts." Then, though the young man followed the demonstration with an apprehension almost pathetic, she gave him without mercy the whole of it. "Lily's rigidly logical. A girl—as *she* knows girls—is 'welcomed,' on her engagement, before anything else can happen, by the family of her young man; and the motherless girl, alone in the world, more punctually than any other. His mother—if she's a 'lady'—takes it upon herself. Then the girl goes and stays with them. But she does nothing before. *Tirez-vous de là.*"

The young man sought on the spot to obey this last injunction, and his effort presently produced a flash. "Oh, if she'll come and *stay* with us"—all would, easily, be well! The flash went out, however, when Lady Champer returned: "Then let the Princess invite her."

Lily a fortnight later simply said to her, from one hour to the other, "I'm going home," and took her breath away by sailing on the morrow with the Bransbys. The tense cord had somehow snapped; the proof was in the fact that the Prince, dashing off to his good friend at this crisis an obscure, an ambiguous note, started the same night for Rome. Lady Champer, for the time, sat in darkness, but during the summer many things occurred; and one day in the autumn, quite unheralded and with the signs of some of them in his face, the Prince appeared again before her. He was not long in telling her his story, which was simply that he had come to her, all the way from Rome, for news of Lily and to talk of Lily. She was prepared, as it happened, to meet his impatience; yet her preparation was but little older than his arrival and was deficient moreover in an important particular. She was not prepared to knock him down, and she made him talk to gain time. She had, however, to understand, put a primary question: "She never wrote, then?"

"Mamma? Oh yes—when she at last got frightened at Miss Gunton's having become so silent. She wrote in August; but Lily's own decisive letter—letter to me, I mean—crossed with it. It was too late—that put an end."

"A *real* end?"

Everything in the young man showed how real. "On the ground of her being willing no longer to keep up, by the stand she had taken, such a relation between mamma and *me*. But her rupture," he wailed, "keeps it up more than anything else."

"And is it very bad?"

"Awful, I assure you. I've become for my mother a person who has made her make, all for nothing, an unprecedented advance, a humble submission; and she's so disgusted, all round, that it's no longer the same old charming thing for us to be together. It makes it worse for her that I'm still madly in love."

"Well," said Lady Champer after a moment, "if you're still madly in love I can only be sorry for you."

"You can *do* nothing for me?—don't advise me to go over?"

She had to take a longer pause. "You don't at all know then what has happened?—that old Mr. Gunton has died and left her everything?"

All his vacancy and curiosity came out in a wild echo.

"Everything?"

"She writes me that it's a great deal of money."

"You've just heard from her, then?"

"This morning. I seem to make out," said Lady Champer, "an extraordinary number of dollars."

"Oh, I was sure it was!" the young man moaned.

"And she's engaged," his friend went on, "to Mr. Bransby."

He bounded, rising before her. "Mr. Bransby?"

"'Adam P.'—the gentleman with whose mother and sisters she went home. *They*, she writes, have beautifully welcomed her."

"*Dio mio!*" The Prince stared; he had flushed with the blow, and the tears had come into his eyes. "And I believed she loved me!"

"*I* didn't!" said Lady Champer with some curtness.

He gazed about; he almost rocked; and, unconscious of her words, he appealed, inarticulate and stricken. At last, however, he found his voice. "What on earth then shall I do? I can less than ever go back to mamma!"

She got up for him, she thought for him, pushing a better chair into her circle. "Stay here with me, and I'll ring for tea. Sit there nearer the fire—you're cold."

"Awfully!" he confessed as he sank. "And I believed she loved me!" he repeated as he stared at the fire.

"*I* didn't!" Lady Champer once more declared. This time, visibly, he heard her, and she immediately met his wonder. "No—it was all the rest; your great historic position, the glamour of your name, and your past. Otherwise what she stood out for wouldn't be excusable. But she has the sense of such things, and *they* were what she loved." So, by the fire, his hostess explained it, while he wondered the more.

"I thought that last summer you told me just the contrary."

It seemed, to do her justice, to strike her. "Did I? Oh, well, how does one know? With Americans one is lost!"

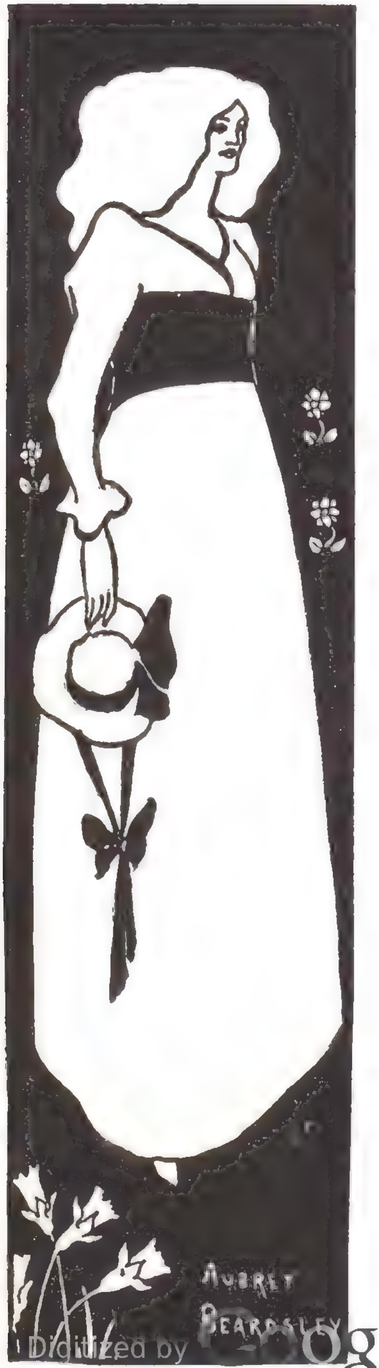
The Parting

By MICHAEL DRAYTON

SINCE there's no help, come let us kiss and part—
Nay, I have done, you get no more of me;
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
Shake hands forever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes,
—Now if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

Daffodils

And rest at last where souls unbodied dwell
In ever-flowering meads of asphodel. **Homer.**



(*Our common name for the* narcissus pseudo-narcissus *is a corruption of the classic asphodel—French, aspodèle. It was formerly called affadil; and its "flour" was believed to cure madness. The ancients planted it on graves, holding that the spirits of the dead sustained themselves on its roots; and it was dedicated to Pluto since, as stated by Pliny, the shades beyond Acheron wandered through meadows of asphodel, striving to reach the waters of Lethe.*)

To Daffodils—By Robert Herrick

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die
As your hours do, and dry
Away,
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

To Daffodils—By Austin Dobson

O yellow flowers by HERRICK sung!
O yellow flowers that danced and swung
In WORDSWORTH's verse, and now to me,
Unworthy, from this "pleasant lea,"
Laugh back, unchanged and ever young;—

Ah, what a text to us o'erstrung,
O'erwrought, o'erreaching, hoarse of lung,
You teach by that immortal glee,
O yellow flowers!

We, by the Age's œstrus stung,
Still hunt the New with eager tongue,
Vexed ever with the Old, but ye,
What ye have been ye still shall be,
When we are dust the dust among,
O yellow flowers!

Strewe me the ground with daffodoundillies,
And cowslips, and kingcups, and loved lillies. Spenser.

O Proserpina,
For the flowers now, that frighted thou let st fall
From Dis's wagon! daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty. Shakespeare.

By the streams that ever flow,
By the fragrant winds that blow
  Over the Elysian flowers;
By those happy souls who dwell
In yellow meads of asphodel. Pope.

When the face of night is fair in the dewy downs
And the shining daffodil dies. Tennyson.

A thing of beauty is a joy forever;
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness, but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams and health and quiet breathing.
Therefore on every morrow are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From over dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in. John Keats.

Daffodils—By William Wordsworth

I wander'd lonely as a cloud
  That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,—
  A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
  And twinkle in the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
  Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
  Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay
  In such a jocund company;
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
  In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
  Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the daffodils.

The Purloined Letter

By EDGAR ALLAN POE

Edgar A Poe

"Nil sapientiae odiosus acumine nimio."—SENECA.

AT PARIS, just after dark one gusty evening in the autumn of 18—, I was enjoying the twofold luxury of meditation and a meerschaum, in company with my friend, C. Auguste Dupin, in his little back library or book-closet, *au troisième,* No. 33 Rue Dunôt, Faubourg St. Germain. For one hour at least we had maintained a profound silence; while each, to any casual observer, might have seemed intently and exclusively occupied with the curling eddies of smoke that oppressed the atmosphere of the chamber. For myself, however, I was mentally discussing certain topics which had formed matter for conversation between us at an earlier period of the evening; I mean the affair of the Rue Morgue, and the mystery attending the murder of Marie Rogêt. I looked upon it, therefore, as something of a coincidence, when the door of our apartment was thrown open and admitted our old acquaintance, Monsieur G——, the Prefect of the Parisian police.

We gave him a hearty welcome; for there was nearly half as much of the entertaining as of the contemptible about the man, and we had not seen him for several years. We had been sitting in the dark, and Dupin now arose for the purpose of lighting a lamp, but sat down again, without doing so, upon G.'s saying that he had called to consult us, or rather to ask the opinion of my friend, about some official business which had occasioned a great deal of trouble.

"If it is any point requiring reflection," observed Dupin, as he forbore to enkindle the wick, "we shall examine it to better purpose in the dark."

"That is another of your odd notions," said the Prefect, who had a fashion of calling everything "odd" that was beyond his comprehension, and thus lived amid an absolute legion of "oddities."

"Very true," said Dupin, as he supplie his visitor with a pipe, and rolled towar him a comfortable chair.

"And what is the difficulty now?" asked. "Nothing more in the assassinatio way, I hope?"

"Oh, no; nothing of that nature. Th fact is, the business is *very* simple indee and I make no doubt that we can manage sufficiently well ourselves; but then thought Dupin would like to hear the deta of it, because it is so excessively *odd.*"

"Simple and odd," said Dupin.

"Why, yes; and not exactly that, eithe The fact is, we have all been a good de puzzled because the affair *is* so simple, a yet baffles us altogether."

"Perhaps it is the very simplicity of t thing which puts you at fault," said n friend.

"What nonsense you *do* talk!" repli the Prefect, laughing heartily.

"Perhaps the mystery is a little *too* plain said Dupin.

"Oh, good heavens! who ever heard such an idea?"

"A little *too* self-evident."

"Ha! ha! ha!—ha! ha! ha!--ho! ho! ho roared our visitor, profoundly amused; " Dupin, you will be the death of me yet!"

"And what, after all, *is* the matter hand?" I asked.

"Why, I will tell you," replied the Prefe as he gave a long, steady, and contemplati puff, and settled himself in his chair. will tell you in a few words; but, before begin, let me caution you that this is affair demanding the greatest secrecy, a that I should most probably lose the positi I now hold, were it known that I confided to any one."

"Proceed," said I.

"Or not," said Dupin.

"Well, then; I have received perso information, from a very high quarter, th a certain document of the last importa has been purloined from the royal apartments. The individual who purloined it is known; this beyond a doubt; he was seen to take it. It is known, also, that it still remains in his possession."

"How is this known?" asked Dupin.

"It is clearly inferred," replied the Prefect, "from the nature of the document, and from the non-appearance of certain results which would at once arise from its passing *out* of the robber's possession—that is to say, from his employing it as he must design in the end to employ it."

"Be a little more explicit," I said.

"Well, I may venture so far as to say that the paper gives its holder a certain power in a certain quarter where such power is immensely valuable." The Prefect was fond of the cant of diplomacy.

"Still I do not quite understand," said Dupin.

"No? Well; the disclosure of the document to a third person, who shall be nameless, would bring in question the honour of a personage of most exalted station; and this fact gives the holder of the document an ascendancy over the illustrious personage whose honour and peace are so jeopardized."

"But this ascendancy," I interposed, "would depend upon the robber's knowledge of the loser's knowledge of the robber. Who would dare——"

"The thief," said G., "is the Minister D——, who dares all things, those unbecoming as well as those becoming a man. The method of the theft was not less ingenious than bold. The document in question—a letter, to be frank—had been received by the personage robbed while alone in the royal *boudoir*. During its perusal she was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of the other exalted personage from whom especially it was her wish to conceal it. After a hurried and vain endeavour to thrust it into a drawer, she was forced to place it, open as it was, upon a table. The address, however, was uppermost, and, the contents thus unexposed, the letter escaped notice. At this juncture enters the Minister D——. His lynx eye immediately perceives the paper, recognizes the handwriting of the address, observes the confusion of the personage addressed, and fathoms her secret. After some business transactions, hurried through in his ordinary manner, he produces a letter somewhat similar to the one in question, opens it, pretends to read it, and then places it in close juxtaposition to the other. Again he converses, for some fifteen minutes, upon the public affairs. At length, in taking leave, he takes also from the table the letter to which he had no claim. Its rightful owner saw, but, of course, dared not call attention to the act, in the presence of the third personage, who stood at her elbow. The Minister decamped, leaving his own letter—one of no importance—upon the table."

"Here, then," said Dupin to me, "you have precisely what you demand to make the ascendancy complete—the robber's knowledge of the loser's knowledge of the robber."

"Yes," replied the Prefect; "and the power thus attained has, for some months past, been wielded, for political purposes, to a very dangerous extent. The personage robbed is more thoroughly convinced, every day, of the necessity of reclaiming her letter. But this, of course, cannot be done openly. In fine, driven to despair, she has committed the matter to me."

"Than whom," said Dupin, amid a perfect whirlwind of smoke, "no more sagacious agent could, I suppose, be desired, or even imagined."

"You flatter me," replied the Prefect; "but it is possible that some such opinion may have been entertained."

"It is clear," said I, "as you observe, that the letter is still in the possession of the Minister; since it is this possession, and not any employment of the letter, which bestows the power. With the employment the power departs."

"True," said G.; "and upon this conviction I proceeded. My first care was to make thorough search of the Minister's hotel; and here my chief embarrassment lay in the necessity of searching without his knowledge. Beyond all things, I have been warned of the danger which would result from giving him reason to suspect our design."

"But," said I, "you are quite *au fait* in these investigations. The Parisian police have done this thing often before."

"Oh, yes; and for this reason I did not despair. The habits of the Minister gave me, too, a great advantage. He is frequently absent from home all night. His servants are by no means numerous. They sleep at a distance from their master's apartment, and, being chiefly Neapolitans, are readily made drunk. I have keys, as you know, with which I can open any chamber or cabinet in Paris. For three months a night has not passed, during the greater part of which I have not been engaged, personally, in ransacking the D—— Hôtel. My honour is interested, and, to mention a great secret, the reward is enormous. So I did not abandon the search until I had become fully satisfied that the thief is a more astute man than myself. I fancy that I have investigated every nook and corner of the premises in which it is possible that the paper can be concealed."

"But is it not possible," I suggested, "that although the letter may be in possession of the Minister, as it unquestionably is, he may have concealed it elsewhere than upon his own premises?"

"That is barely possible," said Dupin. "The present peculiar condition of affairs at court, and especially of those intrigues in which D—— is known to be involved, would render the instant availability of the document—its susceptibility of being produced at a moment's notice—a point of nearly equal importance with its possession."

"Its susceptibility of being produced?" said I.

"That is to say, of being *destroyed*," said Dupin.

"True," I observed; "the paper is clearly then upon the premises. As for its being upon the person of the Minister, we may consider that as out of the question."

"Entirely," said the Prefect. "He has been twice waylaid, as if by footpads, and his person rigorously searched under my own inspection."

"You might have spared yourself this trouble," said Dupin. "D——, I presume, is not altogether a fool, and, if not, must have anticipated these waylayings, as a matter of course."

"Not *altogether* a fool," said G.; "but then he's a poet, which I take to be only one remove from a fool."

"True," said Dupin, after a long and thoughtful whiff from his meerschaum, "although I have been guilty of certain doggerel myself."

"Suppose you detail," said I, "the particulars of your search."

"Why, the fact is we took our time, and we searched *everywhere*. I have had long experience in these affairs. I took the entire building, room by room; devoting the nights of a whole week to each. We examined first the furniture of each apartment. We opened every possible drawer; and I presume you know that, to a properly trained police agent, such a thing as a *secret* drawer is impossible. Any man is a dolt who permits a 'secret' drawer to escape him in a search of this kind. The thing is *so* plain. There is a certain amount of bulk—of space—to be accounted for in every cabinet. Then we have accurate rules. The fiftieth part of a line could not escape us. After the cabinets we took the chairs. The cushions we probed with the fine long needles you have seen me employ. From the tables we removed the tops."

"Why so?"

"Sometimes the top of a table, or other similarly arranged piece of furniture, is removed by the person wishing to conceal an article; then the leg is excavated, the article deposited within the cavity, and the top replaced. The bottoms and tops of bedposts are employed in the same way."

"But could not the cavity be detected by sounding?" I asked.

"By no means, if, when the article is deposited, a sufficient wadding of cotton be placed around it. Besides, in our case, we were obliged to proceed without noise."

"But you could not have removed—you could not have taken to pieces *all* articles of furniture in which it would have been possible to make a deposit in the manner you mention. A letter may be compressed into a thin spiral roll, not differing much in shape or bulk from a large knitting-needle, and in this form it might be inserted into the rung of a chair, for example. You did not take to pieces all the chairs?"

"Certainly not; but we did better—we examined the rungs of every chair in the hotel, and, indeed, the jointings of every description of furniture, by the aid of a most powerful microscope. Had there been any traces of recent disturbance we should not have failed to detect it instantly. A single grain of gimlet dust, for example, would have been as obvious as an apple. Any disorder in the glueing—any unusual gaping in the joints—would have sufficed to ensure detection."

"I presume you looked to the mirrors, between the boards and the plates, and you probed the beds and the bedclothes, as well as the curtains and carpets."

"That, of course; and when we had absolutely completed every particle of the furniture in this way, then we examined the house itself. We divided its entire surface into compartments, which we numbered, so that none might be missed; then we scrutinized each individual square inch throughout the premises, including the two houses immediately adjoining, with the miscroscope, as before."

"The two houses adjoining!" I exclaimed; "you must have had a great deal of trouble."

"We had; but the reward offered is prodigious."

"You include the *grounds* about the houses?"

"All the grounds are paved with brick. They gave us comparatively little trouble. We examined the moss between the bricks, and found it undisturbed."

"You looked among D——'s papers, of course, and into the books of the library?"

"Certainly; we opened every package and parcel; we not only opened every book, but we turned over every leaf in each volume, not contenting ourselves with a mere shake, according to the fashion of some of our police officers. We also measured the thickness of every book-*cover*, with the most accurate admeasurement, and applied to each the most jealous scrutiny of the microscope. Had any of the bindings been recently meddled with, it would have been utterly impossible that the fact should have escaped observation. Some five or six volumes, just from the hands of the binder, we carefully probed longitudinally, with the needles."

"You explored the floors beneath the carpets?"

"Beyond doubt. We removed every carpet, and examined the boards with the microscope."

"And the paper on the walls?"

"Yes."

"You looked into the cellars?"

"We did."

"Then," I said, "you have been making a miscalculation, and the letter is *not* upon the premises, as you suppose."

"I fear you are right there," said the Prefect. "And now, Dupin, what would you advise me to do?"

"To make a thorough re-search of the premises."

"That is absolutely needless," replied G——. "I am not more sure that I breathe than I am that the letter is not at the hotel."

"I have no better advice to give you," said Dupin. "You have, of course, an accurate description of the letter?"

"Oh, yes!" And here the Prefect, producing a memorandum book, proceeded to read aloud a minute account of the internal, and especially of the external appearance of the missing document. Soon after finishing the perusal of this description, he took his departure more entirely depressed in spirits than I had ever known the good gentleman before.

In about a month afterwards he paid us another visit, and found us occupied very nearly as before. He took a pipe and a chair and entered into some ordinary conversation. At length I said—

"Well, but G——, what of the purloined letter? I presume you have at last made up your mind that there is no such thing as overreaching the Minister?"

"Confound him, say I—yes; I made the re-examination, however, as Dupin suggested—but it was all labour lost, as I knew it would be."

"How much was the reward offered, did you say?" asked Dupin.

"Why, a very great deal—a *very* liberal reward—I don't like to say how much, precisely; but I *will* say, that I wouldn't mind giving my individual cheque for fifty thousand francs to any one who could obtain me that letter. The fact is, it is becoming of more and more importance every day; and the reward has been lately doubled. If it were trebled, however, I could do no more than I have done."

"Why, yes," said Dupin drawlingly, between the whiffs of his meerschaum, "I really—think, G——, you have not exerted yourself—to the utmost—in this matter. You might—do a little more, I think, eh?"

"How?—in what way?"

"Why—puff, puff—you might—puff, puff—employ counsel in the matter, eh?—puff, puff, puff. Do you remember the story they tell of Abernethy?"

"No; hang Abernethy!"

"To be sure! hang him and welcome. But once upon a time, a certain rich miser conceived the design of sponging upon this Abernethy for a medical opinion. Getting up, for this purpose, an ordinary conversation in a private company, he insinuated his case to the physician, as that of an imaginary individual.

"'We will suppose,' said the miser, 'that his symptoms are such and such; now, doctor, what would *you* have directed him to take?'

"'Take!' said Abernethy, 'why, take *advice*, to be sure.'"

"But," said the Prefect, a little discomposed, "I am *perfectly* willing to take advice, and to pay for it. I would *really* give fifty thousand francs to any one who would aid me in the matter."

"In that case," replied Dupin, opening a drawer, and producing a cheque-book, "you may as well fill me up a cheque for the amount mentioned. When you have signed it, I will hand you the letter."

I was astounded. The Prefect appeared

absolutely thunderstricken. For some minutes he remained speechless and motionless, looking incredulously at my friend with open mouth, and eyes that seemed starting from their sockets; then, apparently recovering himself in some measure, he seized a pen, and after several pauses and vacant stares, finally filled up and signed a cheque for fifty thousand francs, and handed it across the table to Dupin. The latter examined it carefully and deposited it in his pocket-book; then, unlocking an *escritoire*, took thence a letter and gave it to the Prefect. This functionary grasped it in a perfect agony of joy, opened it with a trembling hand, cast a rapid glance at its contents, and then, scrambling and struggling to the door, rushed at length unceremoniously from the room and from the house, without having uttered a syllable since Dupin had requested him to fill up the cheque.

When he had gone, my friend entered into some explanations.

"The Parisian police," he said, "are exceedingly able in their way. They are persevering, ingenious, cunning, and thoroughly versed in the knowledge which their duties seem chiefly to demand. Thus, when G—— detailed to us his mode of searching the premises at the Hôtel D——, I felt entire confidence in his having made a satisfactory investigation—so far as his labours extended."

"So far as his labours extended?" said I.

"Yes," said Dupin. "The measures adopted were not only the best of their kind, but carried out to absolute perfection. Had the letter been deposited within the range of their search, these fellows would, beyond a question, have found it."

I merely laughed—but he seemed quite serious in all that he said.

"The measures, then," he continued, "were good in their kind, and well executed; their defect lay in their being inapplicable to the case, and to the man. A certain set of highly ingenious resources are, with the Prefect, a sort of Procrustean bed, to which he forcibly adapts his designs. But he perpetually errs by being too deep or too shallow for the matter in hand; and many a schoolboy is a better reasoner than he. I knew one about eight years of age, whose success at guessing in the game of 'even and odd' attracted universal admiration. This game is simple, and is played with marbles. One player holds in his hand a number of these toys, and demands of another whether that number is even or odd. If the guess is right, the guesser wins one; if wrong, he loses one. The boy to whom I allude won all the marbles of the school. Of course he had some principle of guessing; and this lay in mere observation and admeasurement of the astuteness of his opponents. For example, an arrant simpleton is his opponent, and, holding up his closed hand, asks, 'Are they even or odd?' Our schoolboy replies, 'Odd,' and loses; but upon the second trial he wins, for he then says to himself, 'The simpleton had them even upon the first trial, and his amount of cunning is just sufficient to make him have them odd upon the second; I will therefore guess odd'—he guesses odd, and wins. Now, with a simpleton a degree above the first, he would have reasoned thus: 'This fellow finds that in the first instance I guessed odd, and, in the second, he will propose to himself, upon the first impulse, a simple variation from even to odd, as did the first simpleton; but then a second thought will suggest that this is too simple a variation, and finally he will decide upon putting it even as before. I will therefore guess even'—he guesses even, and wins. Now this mode of reasoning in the schoolboy, whom his fellows termed 'lucky'—what, in its last analysis, is it?"

"It is merely," I said, "an identification of the reasoner's intellect with that of his opponent."

"It is," said Dupin; "and upon inquiring of the boy by what means he effected the *thorough* identification in which his success consisted, I received answer as follows: 'When I wish to find out how wise, or how stupid, or how good, or how wicked is anyone, or what are his thoughts at the moment, I fashion the expression of my face, as accurately as possible, in accordance with the expression of his, and then wait to see what thoughts or sentiments arise in my mind or heart, as if to match or correspond with the expression.' This response of the schoolboy lies at the bottom of all the spurious profundity which has been attributed to Rochefoucauld, to La Bougive, to Machiavelli, and to Campanella."

"And the identification," I said, "of the reasoner's intellect with that of his opponent depends, if I understand you aright, upon the accuracy with which the opponent's intellect is admeasured."

"For its practical value it depends upon this," replied Dupin; "and the Prefect and his cohort fail so frequently, first, by default of his identification, and, secondly, by ill-admeasurement, or rather through non-admeasurement, of the intellect with which they are engaged. They consider only their *own* ideas of ingenuity; and, in searching for anything hidden, advert only to the modes in which *they* would have hidden it. They are right in this much—that their own ingenuity is a faithful representative of that of *the mass;* but when the cunning of the individual felon is diverse in character from their own, the felon foils them, of course. This always happens when it is above their own, and very usually when it is below. They have no variation of principle in their investigations; at best, when urged by some unusual emergency—by some extraordinary reward—they extend or exaggerate their old modes of *practice,* without touching their principles. What, for example, in this case of D——, has been done to vary the principle of action? What is all this boring, and probing, and sounding, and scrutinizing with the microscope, and dividing the surface of the building into registered square inches—what is it all but an exaggeration *of the application* of the one principle or set of principles of search, which are based upon the one set of notions regarding human ingenuity, to which the Prefect, in the long routine of his duty, has been accustomed? Do you not see he has taken it for granted that *all* men proceed to conceal a letter—not exactly in a gimlet-hole bored in a chair-leg—but, at least, in *some* out-of-the-way hole or corner suggested by the same tenor of thought which would urge a man to secrete a letter in a gimlet-hole bored in a chair-leg? And do you not see also, that such *recherchés* nooks for concealment are adapted only for ordinary occasions, and would be adopted only by ordinary intellects; for, in all cases of concealment, a disposal of the article concealed—a disposal of it in this *recherché* manner—is, in the very first instance, presumable and presumed; and thus its discovery depends, not at all upon the acumen, but altogether upon the mere care, patience, and determination of the seekers; and where the case is of importance—or, what amounts to the same thing in the policial eyes, when the reward is of magnitude—the qualities in question have *never* been known to fail. You will now understand what I meant in suggesting that, had the purloined letter been hidden anywhere within the limits of the Prefect's examination—in other words, had the principle of its concealment been comprehended within the principles of the Prefect—its discovery would have been a matter altogether beyond question. This functionary, however, has been thoroughly mystified; and the remote source of his defeat lies in the supposition that the Minister is a fool, because he has acquired renown as a poet. All fools are poets—this the Prefect *feels;* and he is merely guilty of a *non distributio medii* in thence inferring that all poets are fools."

"But is this really the poet?" I asked. "There are two brothers, I know; and both have attained reputation in letters. The Minister, I believe, has written learnedly on the Differential Calculus. He is a mathematician, and no poet."

"You are mistaken; I know him well; he is both. As poet *and* mathematician, he would reason well; as mere mathematician, he could not have reasoned at all, and thus would have been at the mercy of the Prefect."

"You surprise me," I said, "by these opinions, which have been contradicted by the voice of the world. You do not mean to set at naught the well-digested idea of centuries. The mathematical reason has long been regarded as *the* reason *par excellence.*"

"'*Il y a à parier,*'" replied Dupin, quoting from Chamfort, "'*que toute idée publique, toute convention reçue, est une sottise, car elle a convenue au plus grand nombre.*' The mathematicians, I grant you, have done their best to promulgate the popular error to which you allude, and which is none the less an error for its promulgation as truth. With an art worthy a better cause, for example, they have insinuated the term 'analysis' into application to algebra. The French are the originators of this particular deception; but if a term is of any importance—if words derive any value from applicability—then 'analysis' conveys 'algebra' about as much as, in Latin, '*ambitus*' implies 'ambition,' '*religio*' 'religion,' or '*homines honesti*' a set of *honourable* men."

"You have a quarrel on hand, I see," said I, "with some of the algebraists of Paris; but proceed."

"I dispute the availability, and thus the value, of that reason which is cultivated in any especial form other than the abstractly logical. I dispute, in particular, the reason educed by mathematical study. The mathematics are the science of form and quantity; mathematical reasoning is merely logic applied to observation upon form and quantity. The great error lies in supposing that even the truths of what is called *pure* algebra are abstract or general truths.

And this error is so egregious that I am confounded at the universality with which it has been received. Mathematical axioms are *not* axioms of general truth. What is true of *relation*—of form and quantity—is often grossly false in regard to morals, for example. In this latter science it is very usually *un*true that the aggregated parts are equal to the whole. In chemistry also the axiom fails. In the consideration of motive it fails; for two motives, each of a given value, have not, necessarily, a value when united, equal to the sum of their values apart. There are numerous other mathematical truths which are only truths within the limits of *relation*. But the mathematician argues, from his *finite truths*, through habit, as if they were of an absolutely general applicability—as the world indeed imagines them to be. Bryant, in his very learned *Mythology*, mentions an analogous source of error, when he says that 'although the Pagan fables are not believed, yet we forget ourselves continually, and make inferences from them as existing realities.' With the algebraists, however, who are Pagans themselves, the 'Pagan fables' *are* believed, and the inferences are made, not so much through lapse of memory, as through an unaccountable addling of the brains. In short, I never yet encountered the mere mathematician who could be trusted out of equal roots, or one who did not clandestinely hold it as a point of his faith that $x^2 + px$ was absolutely and unconditionally equal to q. Say to one of these gentlemen, by way of experiment, if you please, that you believe occasions may occur where $x^2 + px$ is *not* altogether equal to q, and, having made him understand what you mean, get out of his reach as speedily as convenient, for, beyond doubt, he will endeavour to knock you down.

"I mean to say," continued Dupin, while I merely laughed at his last observations, "that if the Minister had been no more than a mathematician, the Prefect would have been under no necessity of giving me this cheque. I knew him, however, as both mathematician and poet, and my measures were adapted to his capacity, with reference to the circumstances by which he was surrounded. I knew him as a courtier, too, and as a bold *intriguant*. Such a man, I considered, could not fail to be aware of the ordinary policial modes of action. He could not have failed to anticipate—and events have proved that he did not fail to anticipate—the waylayings to which he was subjected. He must have foreseen, I reflected, the secret investigations of his premises. His frequent absences from home at night, which were hailed by the Prefect as certain aids to his success, I regarded only as ruses to afford opportunity for thorough search to the police, and thus the sooner to impress them with the conviction to which G——, in fact, did finally arrive—the conviction that the letter was not upon the premises. I felt, also, that the whole train of thought, which I was at some pains in detailing to you just now, concerning the invariable principle of policial action in searches for articles concealed—I felt that this whole train of thought would necessarily pass through the mind of the Minister. It would imperatively lead him to despise all the ordinary *nooks* of concealment. *He* could not, I reflected, be so weak as not to see that the most intricate and remote recess of his hotel would be as open as his commonest closets to the eyes, to the probes, to the gimlets, and to the microscopes of the Prefect. I saw, in fine, that he would be driven, as a matter of course, to *simplicity*, if not deliberately induced to it as a matter of choice. You will remember, perhaps, how desperately the Prefect laughed when I suggested, upon our first interview, that it was just possible this mystery troubled him so much on account of its being so *very* self-evident."

"Yes," said I, "I remember his merriment well. I really thought he would have fallen into convulsions."

"The material world," continued Dupin, "abounds with very strict analogies to the immaterial; and thus some colour of truth has been given to the rhetorical dogma that metaphor, or simile, may be made to strengthen an argument, as well as to embellish a description. The principle of the *vis inertiæ*, for example, seems to be identical in physics and metaphysics. It is not more true in the former that a large body is with more difficulty set in motion than a smaller one, and that its subsequent momentum is commensurate with this difficulty, than it is, in the latter, that intellects of the vaster capacity, while more forcible, more constant, and more eventful in their movements than those of inferior grade, are yet the less readily moved, and more embarrassed and full of hesitation in the first few steps of their progress. Again, have you ever noticed which of the street signs over the shop-doors are the most attractive of attention?"

"I have never given the matter a thought," I said.

"There is a game of puzzles," he resumed, "which is played upon a map. One party playing requires another to find a given word—the name of town, river, state or empire—any word, in short, upon the motley and perplexed surface of the chart. A novice in the game generally seeks to embarrass his opponents by giving them the most minutely lettered names; but the adept selects such words as stretch, in large characters, from one end of the chart to the other. These, like the over-largely lettered signs and placards of the street, escape observation by dint of being excessively obvious; and here the physical oversight is precisely analogous with the moral inapprehension by which the intellect suffers to pass unnoticed those considerations which are too obtrusively and too palpably self-evident. But this is a point, it appears, somewhat above or beneath the understanding of the Prefect. He never once thought it probable, or possible, that the Minister had deposited the letter immediately beneath the nose of the whole world, by way of best preventing any portion of that world from perceiving it.

"But the more I reflected upon the daring, dashing, and discriminating ingenuity of D——; upon the fact that the document must always have been *at hand*, if he intended to use it to good purpose; and upon the decisive evidence, obtained by the Prefect, that it was not hidden within the limits of that dignitary's ordinary search—the more satisfied I became that, to conceal this letter, the Minister had resorted to the comprehensive and sagacious expedient of not attempting to conceal it at all.

"Full of these ideas, I prepared myself with a pair of green spectacles, and called one fine morning, quite by accident, at the Ministerial hotel. I found D—— at home, yawning, lounging, and dawdling, as usual, and pretending to be in the last extremity of *ennui*. He is, perhaps, the most really energetic human being now alive—but that is only when nobody sees him.

"To be even with him, I complained of my weak eyes, and lamented the necessity of the spectacles, under cover of which I cautiously and thoroughly surveyed the whole apartment, while seemingly intent only upon the conversation of my host.

"I paid especial attention to a large writing-table near which he sat, and upon which lay confusedly some miscellaneous letters and other papers, with one or two musical instruments and a few books. Here, however, after a long and very deliberate scrutiny, I saw nothing to excite particular suspicion.

"At length my eyes, in going the circuit of the room, fell upon a trumpery filigree card-rack of pasteboard that hung dangling by a dirty blue ribbon from a little brass knob just beneath the middle of the mantelpiece. In this rack, which had three or four compartments, were five or six visiting cards and a solitary letter. This last was much soiled and crumpled. It was torn nearly in two, across the middle—as if a design, in the first instance, to tear it entirely up as worthless, had been altered, or stayed, in the second. It had a large black seal, bearing the D—— cipher *very* conspicuously, and was addressed, in a diminutive female hand, to D——, the Minister himself. It was thrust carelessly, and even, as it seemed, contemptuously, into one of the uppermost divisions of the rack.

"No sooner had I glanced at this letter, than I concluded it to be that of which I was in search. To be sure, it was, to all appearance, radically different from the one of which the Prefect had read us so minute a description. Here the seal was large and black, with the D—— cipher; there it was small and red, with the ducal arms of the S—— family. Here, the address, to the Minister, was diminutive and feminine; there the superscription, to a certain royal personage, was markedly bold and decided; the size alone formed a point of correspondence. But then the *radicalness* of these differences, which was excessive; the dirt; the soiled and torn condition of the paper, so inconsistent with the *true* methodical habits of D——, and so suggestive of a design to delude the beholder into an idea of the worthlessness of the document; these things, together with the hyper-obtrusive situation of this document, full in the view of every visitor, and thus exactly in accordance with the conclusions to which I had previously arrived; these things, I say, were strongly corroborative of suspicion, in one who came with the intention to suspect.

"I protracted my visit as long as possible, and, while I maintained a most animated discussion with the Minister, upon a topic which I knew well had never failed to interest and excite him, I kept my attention really riveted upon the letter. In this examination, I committed to memory its external appearance and arrangement in the rack; and also fell, at length, upon a discovery which set at rest whatever trivial doubt I might have entertained. In scrutinizing the edges of the paper, I observed them to be more *chafed* than seemed necessary. They presented the *broken* appearance which is manifested when a stiff paper, having been once folded and pressed with a folder, is refolded in a reverse direction, in the same creases or edges which had formed the original fold. This discovery was sufficient. It was clear to me that the letter had been turned, as a glove, inside out, redirected and resealed. I bade the Minister good-morning, and took my departure at once, leaving a gold snuff-box upon the table.

"The next morning I called for the snuff-box, when we resumed, quite eagerly, the conversation of the preceding day. While thus engaged, however, a loud report, as if of a pistol, was heard immediately beneath the windows of the hotel, and was succeeded by a series of fearful screams, and the shoutings of a terrified mob. D—— rushed to a casement, threw it open, and looked out. In the meantime, I stepped to the card-rack, took the letter, put it in my pocket, and replaced it by a facsimile (so far as regards externals) which I had carefully prepared at my lodgings—imitating the D—— cipher, very readily, by means of a seal formed of bread.

"The disturbance in the street had been occasioned by the frantic behaviour of a man with a musket. He had fired it among a crowd of women and children. It proved, however, to have been without ball, and the fellow was suffered to go his way as a lunatic or a drunkard. When he had gone, D—— came from the window, whither I had followed him immediately upon securing the object in view. Soon afterwards I bade him farewell. The pretended lunatic was a man in my own pay."

"But what purpose had you," I asked, "in replacing the letter by a facsimile? Would it not have been better, at the first visit, to have seized it openly, and departed?"

"D——," replied Dupin, "is a desperate man, and a man of nerve. His hotel, too, is not without attendants devoted to his interests. Had I made the wild attempt you suggest, I might never have left the Ministerial presence alive. The good people of Paris might have heard of me no more. But I had an object apart from these considerations. You know my political prepossessions. In this matter, I act as a partisan of the lady concerned. For eighteen months the Minister has had her in his power. She has now him in hers—since, being unaware that the letter is not in his possession, he will proceed with his exactions as if it was. Thus will he inevitably commit himself, at once, to his political destruction. His downfall, too, will not be more precipitate than awkward. It is all very well to talk about the *facilis descensus Averni;* but in all kinds of climbing, as Catalani said of singing, it is far more easy to get up than to come down. In the present instance I have no sympathy—at least no pity—for him who descends. He is that *monstrum horrendum,* an unprincipled man of genius. I confess, however, that I should like very well to know the precise character of his thoughts, when, being defied by her whom the Prefect terms 'a certain personage,' he is reduced to opening the letter which I left for him in the card-rack."

"How? Did you put anything particular in it?"

"Why—it did not seem altogether right to leave the interior blank—that would have been insulting. D——, at Vienna once, did me an evil turn, which I told him, quite good-humouredly, that I should remember. So, as I knew he would feel some curiosity in regard to the identity of the person who had outwitted him, I thought it a pity not to give him a clue. He is well acquainted with my MS., and I just copied into the middle of the blank sheet the words:

> "'——Un dessein si funeste,
> S'il n'est digne d'Atrée, est digne de Thyeste.'

They are to be found in Crébillon's 'Atrée.'"

Madame de Burne

AT last he came to understand that she very much liked to have him with her; that she needed his words of admiration, his glance of love, the discreetly caressing atmosphere of his presence. She needed him just as any idol needs worshippers in order to become a god: in the empty chapel it is only a piece of carved wood, but let even one devotee enter, prostrate himself and pray, and the piece of wood is transformed into a god equal to Allah or Brahma. DE MAUPASSANT.

The Conspirators

By PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

P. Mérimée

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

The Count des Tournelles.
The Countess des Tournelles.
Edouard Nangis—*cousin of the Countess, and Lieutenant in the Light-Horse.*
The Baron de Machicoulis.
The Count de Fierdonjon.
The Marquis de Malespine.
The Chevalier de Thimbray.
Bertrand—*called* Sans-Peur—*formerly an officer in the army of La Vendée.*
Juliette—*femme de chambre of* The Countess des Tournelles.
François—*confidential servant of* The Count des Tournelles.
A Gendarme.

The scene is laid in the Château des Tournelles, in a Department bordering on La Vendée.

A dining-room: in the middle a table covered with a green cloth—upon it ink-wells, pens, etc.

Scene I

François, Juliette (*they are arranging chairs around the table*).

François—I tell you, Juliette, it is just like the Revolution. They are going to try to copy the Committee of Public Safety. The Committee of Public Safety had a green table-cloth exactly like this.

Juliette—Nonsense! You don't know what you are talking about. Madame loathes the Revolution. *I* think that they are going to write "*bouts-rimés*" just as they did last year.

François—What is "bouts-rimés"?

Juliette—It's a game, but you have to be clever to play it. Each one in the party writes something on a sheet of paper and then there's one person who begins to laugh, and then they all laugh like mad. But here comes Madame! Hurry away, and get the arm-chair she told you about.

Scene II

François, Juliette, The Countess des Tournelles.

The Countess—Juliette, fetch me the bronze bell from my boudoir.

Juliette—The bell? But if you wished to call me I should hear the dining-room bell much better—see Madame—this bell.

The Countess—I asked you to fetch the bell from my boudoir, and I did not say it was to call you. Go and get it now.

Juliette—I did not mean any harm, Madame—I'll go at once. (*Aside*) What can all these preparations mean? [*Exit* Juliette, François *enters carrying an arm-chair.*]

The Countess—François, put that chair at the middle of the table. No, stupid! don't put it *on* the table but beside it. *Good!* That will do. That is all I need just now. [*Exit* François.] Really this dining-room looks as if it had been especially planned for our meeting. After all it *is* better than the underground chamber of the old tower, which would have been more romantic but is too damp; and we might have caught pneumonia there. Now this bell will be most effective. Besides it may prove useful, for if the discussion becomes very stormy the President would need it. How nice that would be!

Juliette (*returns with bell*)—Here it is, Madame—where shall I put it?

The Countess—Put it on the table near the big arm-chair. Juliette, yesterday you asked permission to go to see your sister. You may go out to-day. I shall not need you.

Juliette—Oh, but my sister is not expecting me to-day, Madame! Besides, you have given the coachman leave to go out to-day, and Master has told his valet that *he* may go too, so if by chance you were to have any callers there would be no one to open the door.

The Countess (*aside*)—I wonder if she wishes to stay to spy on our movements? (*Aloud*) I am not expecting anyone. But for that matter, Juliette, you may do as you please. In any case you must take the book which is on my desk to Madame de Saint-Denise, that is quite near your sister's—less than a mile and a half from here. Tell her, please, that I thank her very much for the book, and then tell her——

Juliette—Yes, Madame?

The Countess—That—the—meeting—

Juliette—The meeting?

The Countess—The one that she knows about. Wait—I'll just write her a little note. You are really so very forgetful. Oh, by the way, Juliette, go and get me one of the porcelain vases from my mantel-piece. (Juliette *goes out.*) I was forgetting all about the urn for the ballots—the most important thing of all. (*She writes*) "At last it has been arranged that our friends are to meet here to-night, and we are to organize the secret society which"—wait a bit; perhaps I am making it too explicit. I must be more cautious. (*She tears up the note which she has begun and writes again*) "Our friends are coming to see me to-day; we"—ah! now I have an excellent idea! "We shall endeavour to restore to its once honoured position that fashion of bygone days, which you love as deeply as I. P.S. Keep Juliette as long as you can"—a word to the wise—(*Enter* Juliette.) Well, why those *two* vases? I asked you for only one.

Juliette—It was to have them match, Madame.

The Countess—Have them match! Take this one away. Set the other one beside the bell. Here, take this letter and give it with the book to Madame de Saint-Denise.—Ah!—on the way back go to Pitou, the bookseller, and ask him for "The Prince" of Machiavelli: be sure to remember: "The Prince" of Machiavelli.

Juliette—The Prince of Machiavelli. I can tell you, Madame, if it is a new novel M. Pitou will probably not have it in stock yet.

The Countess—*That* is to be found in every library. Wait, I'll write the title: "The Prince" of Machiavelli. The best translation. (Juliette *goes out.*) There! I'm rid of her at last. I haven't any misgivings about François. How long the hour is in coming round! I am simply beside myself with joy. It seems to me that I am just in my element. What a delightful occupation conspiring is! [*Enter the* Count des Tournelles.]

Scene III

The Countess, The Count.

The Countess—Well, Monsieur des Tournelles, the hour draws near. Is your terror subsiding?

The Count—My terror? Say rather my uneasiness; and really I have some ground for it. The idea of conspiring at this present moment!—for to put it plainly we *are* conspiring. I don't know if you realize what danger there is in conspiring in our days, surrounded by police as suspicious as those of the Emperor. Do you know that they are outrageously brutal? and if we were discovered we should be exceedingly lucky if no worse a fate befell us than to spend the rest of our lives in the Château of Ham, or at Vincennes.

The Countess. But think of the glory that will be ours if we succeed.

The Count—It's a high-sounding word—that's all! Moreover, since we are somewhat involved—very slightly involved—in this affair, let us try to direct it with great prudence. Since you wish to conspire—good and well, let us conspire, but do not let us compromise ourselves. And, see here, do you wish to know exactly what I think about the whole matter? I am afraid that you may really harm our cause by your very zeal, which often runs to rashness. For instance, the other day, at the Prefect's, why did you need to say before at least twenty persons, that you did not approve of the war with Spain, and that you would be exceedingly sorry if your cousin were sent there?

The Countess—Well, and isn't it an abominable war—begun by most odious treason? and who are the victims of this black perfidy? Princes whom we should love and respect since they belong to the august family which once governed us, and which by the grace of God, we shall once more see upon the throne.

The Count—Please don't speak so loudly! François might hear us in the hall. Yes, I agree with you it *is* an abominable war, but at the Prefect's! and he noticed it, too, for after dinner his wife passed coffee to everyone but me.

The Countess—What a splendid revenge, and quite worthy of the horrid creature who holds herself as proudly in her carriage as if everyone did not know that her father was in the lace-trade. But patience! In a little while we shall see grovelling in the dust, all these mushrooms that the Revolution has caused to spring up upon the ruins of the throne.

THE COUNT—And we'll restore legal order. How impatient I am to see it once more in force. Under these new laws of the country there is no way of sending all those miserable poachers to the penitentiary; and they don't leave us a single partridge to shoot after the first of October.

THE COUNTESS—And just think of the glorious privileges which our ancestors enjoyed. And, isn't it an injustice that fairly cries out for vengeance, that the Count des Tournelles is not governor of his province. He, whose ancestors had armed retainers and who could levy toll from each person who crossed over that wretched little bridge a league from here.

THE COUNT—I have documents to prove it.

THE COUNTESS—And, moreover, isn't it a burning shame that when you, Monsieur des Tournelles, in a moment of desperation asked to be appointed Chamberlain to the Usurper, your request was not granted? Should not this outrage make you forget all the considerations which prudence might have suggested?

THE COUNT—I did forget myself for a moment, it is true—that man does dazzle one so— But for Heaven's sake don't mention my request to the gentlemen who are coming to-day.

THE COUNTESS—Don't worry about *that*. I speak about it only to show you in what a state of confusion public affairs really are, and to prove to you that the moment has come when every Frenchman should arise and shake off this humiliating yoke.

THE COUNT—You are right. The whole French nation should unite to shake off this yoke. Parbleu! if the whole French nation were to rise in a body against the Usurper I should not be the last to join her ranks. But the deuce take it all, there are only five or six of us to conspire against a man who is all powerful. Our undertaking is certainly hazardous. All last night I thought about it, and I could not close an eye. The truth is I had been reading "The Conspiracies" of Saint-Réal and it had upset me a good deal. They were always discovered. I have a presentiment that—

THE COUNTESS—Spare me, I do beg of you, your fears and your presentiments, Monsieur. You are a man and a gentleman, you have been a soldier, and you are afraid of everything. I, who am only a woman, I look with a calm eye upon all the consequences which may be entailed by this enterprise upon which I have embarked. Let them discover our conspiracy—let them arrest me—let them drag me away to prison! I shall take a grim pleasure in appearing before my judges and pleading my cause. "Yes, I did conspire," I will tell them. "I did conspire to overthrow your Emperor, and if it is a crime to have tried to free one's country from a tyrant then am I guilty!" I shall dress very simply for the occasion, all in black, with my hair parted, no jewels. On second thought, I would have a gold cross. I shall speak, and I shall make an impression, I assure you. A woman who is young and distinguished-looking—accused of conspiracy. Every heart will sympathize with her,—and if I must walk to the scaffold—

THE COUNT—Good Heavens! To hear you talk one might fear that you would go and give yourself up to the police, that you might have the pleasure of posing as the heroine of a novel. Mélanie, Mélanie, these novels that you are always reading will completely turn your head, and that I can confidently predict.

THE COUNTESS—If these works which I read inspire me with such noble and lofty sentiments, it seems to me, sir, that you might do well to read them a little oftener. But time is passing, the appointed hour approaches, and you are not dressed yet. It would be a good idea, too, if you should read over once more, by yourself, my—our speech before reading it to our friends. Be particularly careful to read with special emphasis—the end—the peroration.

THE COUNT—The peroration! Do you know I think it is a little too uncompromising; and then there are some deucedly long sentences—it will be the very dickens to take breath at the right point.

THE COUNTESS—Do please hurry, Monsieur des Tournelles; and above all things try to look more serene. Life is a green cloth, on which there is no sport at all, unless we are willing to play for high stakes.

THE COUNT—Ah, Napoleon, if you knew to what dangers you were exposing yourself, you would not have refused me the Chamberlain's Key.

THE COUNTESS—Do please go quickly. I hear someone coming into the court-yard on horseback.

THE COUNT (*looking out of the window*)—Good Heavens! a soldier—an officer! We are lost! All is discovered. The satellites of the Emperor are coming to arrest us!

The Countess—Have some presence of mind, my dear—Calm yourself! (*She sits down, takes a pen and writes, speaking at the same time*) You say then that we must invite to this ball, Monsieur le Préfet, the Chief of Police, the—

Scene IV

Edouard de Nangis, The Count *and* The Countess.

Edouard—How are you, Cousin Mélanie! Don't you know me?

The Countess—EDOUARD!

Edouard—Come give me a kiss, if you are not afraid of my mustaches. The deuce take it all, if you aren't stunning. You have grown even prettier, you have become—

The Count—Monsieur de Nangis: it gives me great pleasure—

Edouard—Monsieur de Nangis? To the deuce with your Monsieur de Nangis. Just call me plain Cousin Edouard. My word, it is a long while since I last saw you. You've grown older looking.

The Countess—Do you think so?

Edouard—But you, Cousin Mélanie, when I left for Germany you were slight as a willow. While now, thunder and lightning, your waist is slim enough, but otherwise—Diantre! it is evident that you have good air here, and live well too!

The Countess (*aside*)—He is odd with his brusque ways—but he is a charming fellow all the same.

The Count (*in a whisper*)—How are we going to get rid of him?

Edouard—Oh, by the way, I have a month's leave. I am going to spend it with you; it is so deuced good to see your own people, and I was fairly champing at the bit to get off to see you. We'll have perfect larks, won't we? hunting, fishing, and a roaring good time. I am going to raise the very dickens: and you won't be behind me. I used to know you in the old days. I'll tell your wife some of the things I know about you, you sly old dog.

The Count—If I told her some of the things I know about *you*, you scamp!

Edouard—I give you leave. But, see here, I have brought two pointers with me, two thoroughbred English spaniels. They came from Germany. They belonged to a Prince, whose estate we turned upside down. Just wait, and you will see. Ah,—and the day after to-morrow my horses are coming. I have an Arabian mare that I should like my cousin to try. You have boars around here, haven't you? I have a boar-hound too. He is coming from Bohemia. Oh! what a dog! But, Cousin Mélanie, you'll have to shut up your cats, otherwise he would break their backs at a single snap. We are going to have a time of it. You have neighbours, haven't you? The more the merrier. In the morning we'll go hunting—we'll drink Cousin Mélanie's champagne; in the evening we'll have music, we'll sing duets; I have a regular virtuoso voice now—la, la, la, la,—we'll dance, I'll make love to Cousin Mélanie, if her husband isn't jealous; you aren't jealous, old fellow, are you? *Sacrement*, as the Germans say, we might as well enjoy life.

The Count (*in a whisper to* The Countess)—Do try to get him out of the way.

The Countess (*the same*)—I have designs upon him.

Edouard—By the way, old chap, what is your dinner hour? Do you know I'm hungry as a hunter! I could never wait till dinner time.

The Count—I'll have something sent up to your room.

Edouard—No, no, let me have it here, and we'll have a good chat together. I'll just have a snack of anything here. My word, in barracks I learned to eat and talk at the same time, without losing a moment from my food. (*He calls*) I say there, come here—What are your servants' names? I say there!

The Countess (*after having rung, to* François, *who enters*)—Bring in the game pie. What wine will you have?

Edouard—Claret—But, I say, have you still that Pomard you said you were keeping for when I should come back from Germany?

The Countess—You have a good memory—Bring in a bottle of Pomard—You'll hurry up, won't you, Edouard. We are going to need the table in a few minutes. Monsieur des Tournelles, you must go and dress. Edouard will excuse you.

Edouard—Well now, I should say that it *would* be rather silly to stand on ceremony with me. I'll not take a minute to finish. I'll just gobble and run.

The Count (*in a whisper to* The Countess)—How are you going to manage?

The Countess—Just leave it to me.

The Count (*the same*)—Perhaps the best plan would be to postpone the whole affair until after he leaves.

The Countess—Do please go on as I say. I'll be responsible for him. [The Count *retires*.]

Scene V

Edouard, The Countess.

Edouard—What the dickens have you two to talk about? Have you some secrets you wish to keep from me, or am I in the way?

The Countess—Very far from it. We are delighted to see you, Edouard, and a little later I will tell you what M. des Tournelles was saying. You have your same healthy appetite, I see.

Edouard—In camp I learned to eat quickly; in our barracks in Germany I learned to stay a long while at table. So now I eat long and quickly. And don't you know I covered twelve leagues this morning on a ramshackle nag, just to see you a little sooner—But I am forgetting that it isn't polite to have a hearty appetite when one is with a pretty woman. (*He pushes away the pie, and heaves a sigh.*) There! I've finished.

The Countess—You don't mean to say that you are going to stand on ceremony with me. Don't stop. Only be careful not to spoil your appetite for dinner. (*She fills his glass.*) How do you like this wine?

Edouard—Most delicious—Especially when you are pouring it for me.

The Countess—Was it in the army that you learned all these pretty speeches?

Edouard—Here, Cousin Mélanie, will you fill my glass again, please? In the army, you see, we learn to tell the plain truth without any frills, and, speaking of the truth, you are a charmingly beautiful woman. You can take my word for it, for it's true. You are ten times, twenty times prettier than you were four years ago, at the time of your marriage, when I was a raw recruit, head over heels in love with you and afraid to tell you so.

The Countess—What a queer fellow you are!

Edouard—Yes, my word, I am queer—more so than you think—and it lies with you to make me give an exhibition of how queer I can be when I set about it. (*He gets up.*)

The Countess—I can easily believe it. But do sit down and let us have a really serious talk. (*She fills up his glass.*) Tell me about your companions and your love affairs, for the two go hand in hand. I see that you have only one épaulette just as you had when you went away. I thought I should see you come back a colonel at least.

Edouard—Ah, well, we can't have everything we wish for, worse luck. I'm lieutenant still, plain lieutenant. The cross has fairly slipped between my fingers. But patience a bit longer. If a bullet doesn't cut me off—

The Countess—Under the government which we now have there is no chance at all for men of good family. Everything goes to the low-born.

Edouard—Oh, well! I have had bad luck, too. In this wretched Light-Horse no one dies off. I believe the rascals are invulnerable. If I had only been able to take to mathematics, I should have gone into the light artillery. Promotion is rapid, I tell you, in that regiment. Why, if you'll believe it the battery of artillery that enlisted when we did, had to be renewed three times during the last year. One of my friends who was lieutenant last year is going to be promoted major, if he doesn't die of a shot he got in the stomach.

The Countess—If it had not been for the Revolution, Edouard, you with your birth would have been colonel at this very moment.

Edouard—Yes, in those days it wasn't any such great luck to be colonel—wear a cocked hat—carry your sword level, and mount guard at the gate of Mme. de Pompadour, the mistress of Louis XIV—great sport *that* was! A glorious career!

The Countess—Really, Edouard, you are terribly misinformed, or your mind has been horribly perverted. If the Revolution had not upset everything you would have been one of the most fashionable gentlemen of your day. You would be an ornament of the court, you would be marquis.

Edouard—Please, Cousin Mélanie, don't speak about being marquis. In the regiment when they wish to put me into a fine rage they call me "Monsieur le Marquis." It's so perfectly ridiculous to be a marquis. Le Marquis de Mascarille! Jump, Marquis! Parbleu, I got a good sword cut from Simoneau, a lieutenant of the 10th regiment, and gave him another just as good because he called me Marquis. So, you see, as I can not give you a sword cut, if you call me Marquis, I shall kiss you.

The Countess—What a corrupter this Bonaparte is! To think that a young man belonging to a noble family could become the minion of a Corsican. So, you are enthusiastic about your Emperor? He is your idol, your divinity, he is everything to you. You adore him?

Edouard—My word, I may like him, but I am not wild about him; my colonel asked him to give me the cross; and he answered, looking me over from head to foot as if I were a horse on sale, "He is too young." He doesn't mince matters, I tell you.

The Countess—Because he was too young! What odious injustice!

Edouard—As far as that goes you are quite right. At our last engagement we made a charge together with the lancers of the Guard. They are the Emperor's little pet lambs. Thirty of them were knocked out, we lost just as many, but the general in command, wishing to curry favour with Napoleon, said to him, "Your lancers covered themselves with glory, the enemy's hussars were annihilated, but your brave lancers suffered a heavy loss; the Light-Horse of the 10th suffered a slight loss";—so the crosses fell to the lancers, and we got blows, mud, poor quarters and the devil to pay!

The Countess (*filling his glass*)—Wasn't I just saying that he was the most unjust man in the world! Refuse you the cross. You come of too noble stock to fail to resent most violently such an insult.

Edouard—But it is not enough, just to resent it.

The Countess—Certainly not, you must avenge it.

Edouard—Yes! the Emperor would be well paid if I sent in my resignation. And then retire in time of war! It can't be done. Our regiment is going to Spain soon.

The Countess—To Spain! You are going to take part in that frightful, that criminal war? Have you so soon forgotten the treachery of Bayonne?

Edouard—Bah! Bah! These curs of Spaniards will be only too glad if we are willing to rid them of their monks.

The Countess—Oh, Edouard! How you distress me! How sad it is to see you holding such political views.

Edouard—*I?* The deuce take it if I have anything to do with politics!

The Countess—I, who am scarcely older than you, have kept alive memories, which already have lost their power to awaken a response in your heart.

Edouard—What, Cousin Mélanie, can it be possible? Oh! I, too, I have not forgotten a certain time—If you only knew all I suffered at the time of your marriage!

The Countess—Edouard, you don't understand me. I am referring to the days when your father and mine were counted among the firmest supports of the legitimate throne—of the days when men willingly lost their lives in defence of their King. Ah! If the gallant old Marquis de Nangis knew that his son was clamouring for the honour of serving a tyrant, a plebeian usurper, he would rise from the grave and reproach you for dishonouring your noble descent.

Edouard—Really, Cousin Mélanie, you are speaking about things of which I had never heard even the slightest hint. I thought that your husband wished to be Prefect, or Chamberlain or something of that sort. We soldiers, you know, we obey the Emperor because he *is* the Emperor. We are not obliged to know whether he is a usurper or not.

The Countess—That is to say that you give up your human hearts to make slaves of yourselves. You wish to see merely by the eyes, to hear merely by the ears.

Edouard—As a matter of fact he is a usurper, but he is recognized by everyone.

The Countess—Except by all those noble hearts which will never recognize any sovereign other than the exiled princes.

Edouard—The children of Louis XVI? I thought that they died during the Revolution.

The Countess—Alas! The barbarians: they let his son die in a dungeon—but his brothers are in exile—and a Nangis could forget them!

Edouard—Ma foi! the fact is that I have not been reading anything.

The Countess—I will admit that I have been building great hopes on you. I felt sure that the factitious glory of the usurper could not lead you astray. I hoped that I should find you faithful to the cause of the unfortunate.

Edouard—But, Cousin Mélanie, I really look at it in the same light, but I don't quite see how one could set about—

The Countess—Edouard, Edouard, your discretion is, I know, quite beyond your years. I will confide in you. Your political opinions are opposed to mine, it is true; but you are a man of the most sensitive honour and you will not betray me.

Edouard—Oh! Cousin Mélanie! but I repeat that I have no political opinions and if I adopt any, I shall adopt yours.

The Countess—A small band of courageous men have laid a plan to free their country from a shameful yoke: my husband and I are going to work with this end in view. Perhaps by the help of God we may succeed in recalling to France our rightful princes—perhaps we may succumb—and—

Edouard—Oh! my word, you are forming a conspiracy. Malepeste! how you do go at things.

The Countess—Yes, Edouard, a conspiracy. And never was there one more worthy of success. Thinking that you, too, were groaning under the tyranny of the Corsican, I wished to offer you an opportunity of sharing our glory, and our danger—

Edouard—What! you are plotting? seriously? no joke?

The Countess—Yes, Edouard! And weak woman though I may be, I conceived the idea of this plot. Edouard, I have spoken to you very openly, from my heart. If you love your Emperor more than your family, you may reveal our plans, you may work our ruin: I shall have courage to meet my fate.

Edouard—Parbleu! what do you take me for? You are not thinking of what you are saying,—otherwise—my word if you are in, the deuce if I would not like to have a hand in it myself.

The Countess—Can it be true?

Edouard—Why not? I see that it pleases you; and I would go through fire to please you.

The Countess—You delightful lad!

Edouard—A conspiracy, that must be great fun, and conspiracies are my strong point. I was expelled from the lycée because I was at the head of a conspiracy to thrash one of our housemasters. That's why I am such an ignoramus now. They put me into a military school, then they put an épaulette on my shoulder, a sabre to my side, and then theory—forward—march.

The Countess—I have not a doubt that he was some Jacobin who tried to take advantage of his authority to oppress some young gentleman.

Edouard—His name was Ragoulard.

The Countess—Oh! what a Jacobin name: Come now, you are really one of us?

Edouard—Really, now, I don't know whether it is the result of your good wine or the fatigue of the journey; or of your lovely eyes (which is the most probable explanation), but I feel myself on the point of saying—I can't put two and two together, on my honour you have bewitched me!

The Countess—Say, rather, Edouard, that I have awakened in your heart love for our king—a love which is as natural to members of our family as are courage and beauty.

Edouard—Well, then, it is decided. I give in. I shall love our king more than you, Cousin Mélanie,—on my honor the word just slipped out—but I have said what I think—I can't help it if it does make you angry.

The Countess—You are a strange lad, Edouard,—but you have good stuff in you and I am going to try to convert you.

Edouard—Ah! That is what the Bavarian Canoness said to me—the one—(*Aside*) What was I going to let out!

The Countess—We are expecting this very day these friends, these faithful ones of whom I was telling you. They are the most influential men in the whole countryside. The object of our meeting is to form an association, whose aim—yes, an association which will set about—let me see—just so——An association which will act in opposition to the imperial government, and which will seize the first opportunity of overthrowing it.

Edouard—It will take a good hard shove to overthrow this government.

The Countess—Rest assured, we have most powerful men at our disposal. I'll explain that to you more fully during the visit which you are going to make us. Our business to-day is simply to form, to institute our secret society.

Edouard—Oh, say "our conspiracy," the word has a good sound.

The Countess—Certain formalities will have to be gone through with, which you must see—

Edouard—All that I will need to know is that you are going to be there and I am sure to enjoy it.

The Countess—You have given me your word, Edouard—I am counting on you. Come, give me your hand. Edouard, Edouard, do stop—this is all very serious. You swear, do you, to be faithful to our glorious cause?

Edouard—Yes, I swear.

The Countess—Well said, good fellow that you are. Repeat with me the cry with which your ancestors used to march to victory, "Vive le roi."

Edouard—Vive le roi!

The Countess (*clapping her hands*)—He is one of us! he is one of us! he is one of us!

SCENE VI

Edouard, The Countess, The Count.

The Countess—Come, M. des Tournelles; come and embrace a new defender of the good cause.

Edouard (*aside*)—Her husband! The deuce take him.

The Count (*kissing him*)—I am delighted, I am sure. (*Whispers to* **The Countess**) How the deuce did you manage it?

Edouard—Oh, by the way, Cousin Mélanie. You have not kissed the new defender of the good cause. You allow me, Cousin des Tournelles? (*He kisses* The Countess.)

The Countess (*in a whisper to* Edouard)—Edouard, this is not right at all. You are very, very naughty.

Scene VII

The same, François, The Baron de Machicoulis, The Chevalier de Thimbray.

François (*announces*)—M. le Baron de Machicoulis, le Chevalier de Thimbray.

Baron de Machicoulis—Fair Lady, here are two faithful knights who have come to swear allegiance at your feet. (*Noticing* Edouard, *in a whisper*) A soldier? Who is the young man?

The Countess—Baron de Machicoulis, I am delighted to see you looking so well. How do you do, Chevalier? how is Madame de Thimbray? Gentlemen, allow me to present my cousin the Marquis Edouard de Nangis, who is one of us. You will find in him all the courage of his ancestors, as well as their devotion to their rightful kings. Edouard, the Baron de Machicoulis, the Chevalier de Thimbray.

Edouard (*aside*)—What a collection! They should really be put in show-cases.

Baron de Machicoulis—I should have known your cousin to be a Nangis from his great resemblance to the late Marquis de Nangis, his father, whom I knew very well when he was living. We served together once.

Edouard—Ah, you served. (*In a whisper to* The Countess) Whom did he serve?

Baron de Machicoulis—We were together at the siege of Gibraltar. We had it rather hot there, I tell you.

Edouard—I should say so. In Spain and Andalusia.

Baron de Machicoulis (*in a whisper to* The Count)—Is this young man to be relied upon? His manners smack of the regiment.

The Count—My wife says that she answers for him.

Edouard (*in a whisper to* The Countess)—How would you like me to cut off his queue to make you a bell cord?

The Countess (*in a whisper*)—Edouard, you simply have me on tenter hooks.

Chevalier de Thimbray—The others are late, if my watch is right.

The Count—Fierdonjon told me only yesterday that he would be the first one here.

Baron de Machicoulis (*to* Edouard)—Monsieur le Marquis.

Edouard—My name is Monsieur de Nangis or Lieutenant, whichever you please. But no Marquis for me if you please.

The Countess—My cousin is really so very modest (*In a whisper*) He has rather peculiar ideas about certain things.

Baron de Machicoulis—Monsieur de Nangis. Then you have just come from the army, I suppose?

Edouard—Only to-day.

Baron de Machicoulis—From Germany?

Edouard—From Germany.

Baron de Machicoulis—You probably saw the engagement at Wagram?

Edouard—A little.

The Countess—His horse was killed under him and he himself was wounded. Poor boy! What a terrible war it is.

Baron de Machicoulis—I am astonished that Prince Charles allowed himself to be beaten; and he is nevertheless the best tactician in Europe. In the matter of strategy, however, all agree, do they not, in giving the palm to Field Marshal Kalkreuth?

Edouard—I have never heard of the duffer.

Baron de Machicoulis—And,—sir, may I venture to ask in what state you left the army? They say it is pervaded by a strong feeling of discontent.

Edouard—Yes, the common soldier is dissatisfied with the soldier's bread and beans; he would like the finest white bread and chicken.

Baron de Machicoulis—I have been told that the officers of the army——

Edouard—Look here, sir, I was ill, wounded. I was three months in the hospital before coming here,— (*In a whisper to* The Countess) Do deliver me from this fellow, with his mania for asking questions, or I'll insult him before everyone.

Scene VIII

François, The Count de Fierdonjon, The Marquis de Malespine.

François (*announces*)—The Count de Fierdonjon, the Marquis de Malespine. (*She goes out.*)

Edouard (*in a whisper to* The Countess)—Where in the dickens did you hunt up all these characters? There is some joke about it. Not one of them looks the least in the world like a conspirator. They have the kind of faces that would do to decorate screens. Just let me start them going.

THE COUNTESS (*in a whisper to* EDOUARD) Edouard, you are driving me to desperation. (*Aloud*) Monsieur de Fierdonjon, I am charmed to see you. (*In a whisper to* EDOUARD) If you keep this up— (*Aloud*) How do you do, Monsieur de Malespine (*In a whisper to* EDOUARD) We are going to quarrel over this. These are all friends of mine. Promise me that you won't play any tricks. You are not going to, are you?—as you love me? (*Aloud*) Gentlemen, allow me to introduce you to my cousin.

EDOUARD—I will be good, since you forbid me to play any jokes.

THE COUNT—Bertrand is the only one missing now.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY—It is most extraordinary that he is not here yet. The fellow is keeping us waiting.

THE MARQUIS DE MALESPINE—If only he doesn't break his word.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—Des Tournelles, do you know I think that you have displayed a decided lack of prudence in allowing this man to take part in our undertaking. Who can tell if he is to be relied upon? He is a peasant, plain and simple.

THE COUNTESS—He was major in the Royal Army.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—In the army of La Vendée, being short of gentlemen for officers, they were obliged to take clodhoppers. That man does not appeal to me in the least. He shoots over my grounds without asking my permission and I can't get my keepers to testify against him.

THE COUNT—Oh! that's an old habit of his. Monsieur de Kermorgant, from whom you bought the estate, upon your return from the emigration, used to allow him to shoot.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY—That was a good stroke of business that you did, Monsieur de Fierdonjon. Oh! If I had only had the ready money in those days, I too would have bought some of the national property. It went for a mere song. Not that I in the least approve of those infamous spoliations, but when the mischief is done, let us try to see to it, that our enemies are not the ones to profit by it.

THE COUNTESS—Bertrand has a great deal of influence among the peasants. If there were need of a helping hand, he would be invaluable. Besides he has the highest testimonials from his superior officers.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS—You would really think that the police were afraid of him, and that they did not dare to demand him to show his permit to carry arms.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—Come, gentlemen, this is really not seemly that we should wait upon this man. Let us begin.

THE COUNTESS—Why, here he is.

SCENE IX

The same, BERTRAND. (*He is carrying a double-barrelled gun and is followed by a big dog.*)

THE COUNTESS—How do you do, Monsieur Bertrand? Comrade Sans-Peur, as Monsieur de Bonchamps used to call you. You have kept us waiting.

BERTRAND—Excuse me, Countess; the fact of the matter is that I happened upon a covey of partridges and they *did* give me a chase. However, here are two of them, and if you would accept them, they would be very nice in a salmi.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON (*aside*)—I'll wager he killed them on my grounds.

THE COUNTESS—Thank you, I'll accept them with very great pleasure.

EDOUARD (*to* BERTRAND)—That's a fine dog you have there. He is good for all sorts of game.

BERTRAND—Yes, sir, and more than that, if need be, he would spring at a man's throat, if I told him to do it. He has been of use to me upon occasions.

EDOUARD—You had better sell him to me.

BERTRAND—Excuse me, sir, but my dog is not for sale. You are not for sale, are you, Médor? Good old fellow!

THE COUNT—Come, gentlemen, let us lose no time. Let us be seated.

THE COUNTESS (*before sitting down*)—Edouard, you are to sit beside me. Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to believe that you will allow me to be present at your deliberations. I am only a woman, it is true, but I feel that my courage is sufficient to permit me to brave the dangers that you will face. Moreover, it is not the first time a woman has been known to take part in a conspiracy. If I remember my old Plutarch aright the famous Lœena shared the glory of Harmodius and of Aristogiton. She cut out her tongue rather than reveal the names of her friends.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY—My wife should do the same.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS—Madame, we do not wish you to share the fate of Lœena —it would be too great a loss for us. But, we do not for a moment doubt that you would have as great courage and as great love for your rightful king.

THE COUNTESS—Without wishing to boast, I yet may say that I feel sure enough of myself, to affirm that the sight of death itself could not affright me. What would one not brave for so noble a cause? (*She starts to sit down, then with a piercing scream*) Ah!

EDOUARD—What's the matter?

THE COUNT (*frightened*)—What is it? You didn't see anyone under the table, did you?

THE COUNTESS—A spider on my chair. [*They all laugh.*]

BERTRAND (*crushing the spider*)—Bad luck to see a spider in the morning. Good luck if you see it in the evening. It is past noon.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS—Smell this bottle, Countess. I understand your fright. It is a nervous affection, simply. I have more than once faced danger, and yet the mere sight of a mouse is too much for me.

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE—My *bête noire* is toads. But they are poisonous.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY—They say that Ladislas, King of Poland, used to run away whenever he saw apples.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—I have heard it said that——

EDOUARD—But, I say, are we conspiring, or are we not?

THE COUNT—My cousin is right. Gentlemen, in order to conduct our meetings in regular form, and especially to give them the air of gravity, which they should have, it seems to me it would be business-like to elect a president; and if no one else offers himself, I will volunteer to fill the office.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS—But, Count, this is an irregular proceeding. As a president is a person who exercises considerable influence in this whole gathering, this same president should be elected by this same gathering, so that he may properly represent the real feeling of the assembly, so that he may be, so to speak, the expression of the sentiments of the gathering.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY—Certainly we must put it to a vote.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—But why should we put it to a vote? I would call your attention to the fact, gentlemen, that in all gatherings of our ancestors, of the nobility of this province, the Counts of Fierdonjon always occupied the president's chair. Now, since it is our aim to re-establish former customs, it seems to me——

BARON DE MACHICOULIS—Sir, I take the liberty of calling into question the accuracy of your statement. I possess amongst my papers an authentic document according to which, at the time of the birth of the great dauphin, a gathering of the nobility of this province was held in order to inaugurate fireworks and a ball to celebrate this happy event. And it was Pierre-Ponce de Machicoulis who was called upon by this assembly to preside over it and take complete charge of affairs.

THE COUNT—And what about the Des Tournelles, gentlemen? You seem to be forgetting them. I don't think that any of you can for a moment contest the antiquity of our title.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—A thousand pardons, Count, but in the archives of the province I find your name only some eighty-five years after mine.

THE COUNT—My genealogy is to be relied upon that——

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE—In 1452 the Malespine——

THE COUNTESS—Gentlemen, the proposal which Monsieur de Thimbray has just made will spare us an unpleasant discussion. Let us put it to a vote. Let each one write a name upon a slip of paper and deposit it in this urn.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—At any rate, I have not the least faith in genealogies; it is easy enough to manufacture them. Archives on the other hand are different; you can depend upon them.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS—And monuments. You all know the carved stone——

THE COUNT—What! A genealogy written on deer skin with gothic letters!

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE—Pepin the Little bestowed— (*They all speak at once.* EDOUARD *rings the bell wildly.*)

SCENE X

The same, FRANÇOIS *enters.*

THE COUNT—What does this idiot want in here?

FRANÇOIS—Did Madame ring?

THE COUNTESS—No, you may go out again.

FRANÇOIS—Then someone rang at the front door. I am going to see.

THE COUNT—No, you idiot. No one has been ringing; go away and leave us. (FRANÇOIS *goes out.*

SCENE XI

The same, except FRANÇOIS.

THE COUNTESS—Let us give over this discussion, I beg you. Whatever choice we may make cannot fail to be an excellent one. Here is paper, gentlemen. You can write the name of your candidate.

Chevalier de Thimbray—We should appoint someone to read the ballots who does not know our writing.

Baron de Machicoulis—A good thought. Monsieur de Nangis, will you be so good as to take charge of the matter?

Edouard—Very gladly. (*Aside.*) Amiable confidence in one another.

The Countess (*to* **Bertrand**)—Come nearer, Bertrand. Why do you stay at one side? Write your ballot.

Bertrand—You are very kind, indeed.

The Countess—Write a name (*in a whisper*)—my husband's name.

Bertrand—Ah! Madame, the fact is, I can't write. I am a poor peasant. I don't understand all these ceremonies in the very least. (*All except* **Bertrand** *deposit their ballots in the urn.*)

Edouard—Is that all? Let us see! Monsieur de Machicoulis, one vote.

Baron de Machicoulis—Sir, I beg that you will burn the ballot at once.

Count de Fierdonjon (*in a whisper to the* **Marquis de Malespine**)—I'll wager he wrote his own name.

Edouard—Monsieur de Fierdonjon, one vote.

Baron de Machicoulis (*in a whisper to the* **Marquis de Malespine**)—What will you wager that he voted for himself?

Count de Fierdonjon (*to* **Edouard**)—Burn it, if you please, sir.

Edouard—M. des Tournelles, one vote. Madame des Tournelles, one vote. M. de Thimbray, one vote. (*The deuce.*) This is very queer. Each person has received a single vote.

The Countess—Someone has voted for me. He has made a mistake; he doubtless intended it for my husband.

Edouard—Not at all; for I cast that vote, and I wished to elect you president.

Count de Fierdonjon—But that is an absurd idea. A woman could not sit as our president.

Edouard—I understand you to say it is an absurd idea? The expression strikes me as being so extraordinary, that I shall ask you to repeat it.

Count de Fierdonjon—I was saying, sir, that it was not customary to call upon a woman to occupy a president's chair.

Edouard—I make it a practice, sir, never to let pass an impertinence,—and——

The Countess (*in a whisper*)—Edouard, Edouard. (*Aloud.*) Quick, quick! let us have a second ballot. (*In a whisper*) Edouard, vote for my husband. M. de Thimbray, do vote for my husband; he will make an excellent president. Come, Sans-Peur, you must vote, too, my good fellow. I will write for you. Monsieur des Tournelles is the one you will wish to vote for. (*In a whisper*) Isn't he?

Bertrand—Anything you wish, Madame.

Edouard (*counting the ballot*)—Monsieur des Tournelles, one vote. Monsieur de Fierdonjon, Monsieur des Tournelles, Monsieur des Tournelles, Monsieur de Malespine, Monsieur de Machicoulis, Monsieur des Tournelles. Monsieur des Tournelles has four votes. Come, sir, take your place in the President's chair.

Count de Fierdonjon (*in a whisper to the* **Marquis de Malespine**)—They have begun to cabal already. Oh! I can never stay with this pack.

Baron de Machicoulis (*in a whisper to the* **Marquis de Malespine**)—She wants to run everything.

The Count—Gentlemen, before proceeding to the business of this meeting, I shall ask your permission to bring before you some general consideration upon the present state of affairs in Europe. I think that I am not wrong in believing that they will not be altogether devoid of interest. (*He draws from his pocket a rather large number of little sheets of note paper. These sheets are not fastened together.*)

Edouard—What! You are going to read all that to us? The deuce!

Count—It is written on one side and with a wide margin.

Count de Fierdonjon (*aside*)—He got himself elected President so that he could hold the floor all the time.

Count des Tournelles (*coughs, clears his throat, puts on his spectacles, and reads the pages in a monotonous voice, and without paying any particular attention to the punctuation, as one would do in reading the work of another.* **Edouard** *in the meantime whispers in the ear of* **The Countess**, *and she motions to him to listen. He pays no attention and thereupon she loses patience and turns her back upon him. Next he calls* **Bertrand**'s *dog, pets it, makes it give its paw, etc. Then while* **The Count** *holds in his hand one of the loose sheets of his speech,* **Edouard** *takes two or three from the table without his noticing it, crumples them up into a ball, gives them to the dog, who tears them to pieces. No one notices this manœuvre.* **The Count** (*reads*)—"The ways of Providence are divine in their inscrutability.

There is no evil in nature that has not its antidote. What poison is there, no matter how terrible in its violence, which cannot be successfully combatted by the remedies which the kind hand of Providence offers us? And by a forethought, for which we cannot be too grateful, we see these remedies in greatest profusion in those climes where man seems to be exposed to the greatest dangers. Travellers who have penetrated into the depths of those countries which are always parched by a blazing sun, tell us of those terrible serpents whose slightest bite seems to be followed by inevitable death. Ah! let them not forget to tell us that these same serpents usually take refuge under the broad leaves of those very plants whose saps when applied to the wounds revives the unfortunate victim and soon restores him to health. The manchineel-tree, whose mere shadow breathes death, grows only, by divine Providence, near the ocean waves; and sea-water, as we all know, is a certain antidote of the poison which it exhales. So, Gentlemen, when we see a people torn by baneful dissensions, or groaning under the iron rod of an oppressor, do not let us give ourselves up to fruitless despair, but let us look about us for the remedy or medicine which Providence doubtless holds in reserve."

Chevalier de Thimbray (*aside*)—That all smacks too much of pharmacy.

"Yes, Gentlemen, the study of history, which is too often merely an amusement for the man of the world, would become, by the crimes of which it draws the hideous picture, a subject of disgust and of horror for the humanitarian philosopher, did not the consoling thought that a hidden Providence presides over the destiny of empires come to support the book about to fall from his hand, and show him that if, too often, some men forgetting divine precepts, and giving themselves up a prey to their unbridled passions, open up for their fellow citizens and for themselves an abyss of ills, often too, and as if, so to speak, by an enforced sequence other men, the virtuous, inspired by Heaven, use their courage as a protecting dike against the devastating torrent of revolutions, and close up by their powerful hands the maelstrom which is about to swallow up their country!!! (*Aside*) Ouf! (*Reading*) A man was found—infirm—mutilated, condemned to spend in suffering——"

The Countess (*prompting him*)—No; a Christian orator once said——

The Count—Quite right—"A man was found—" Excuse me, Gentlemen, a paper must have been misplaced— Well now, I can't find it. Can it have been mislaid? Still, my dearest, when you copied the manuscript for me, nothing was missing. Ah! Isn't this it? "A man was found," said the usurper—no. I don't know what has become of it.

Chevalier de Thimbray—A man was found, but a paper was lost.

The Countess—My dear, have you not the rough copy?

The Count—No, I burned it. But really I cannot understand this.

Baron de Machicoulis—While M. des Tournelles is looking for his speech, will you, in order that we lose no time, listen to a few brief reflections, which have been suggested to me by recent political events?

Marquis de Malespine (*at the same time*)—I have prepared a short paper, and if you will have the goodness to give me your attention for half an hour— [*The* Count de Fierdonjon *draws out his portfolio, and* Chevalier de Thimbray *searches his pockets.*]

Edouard—Heaven be merciful! Each one has his address prepared. Cousin Mélanie, we are lost; we shall never get a chance to dine. And you, Monsieur Bertrand, haven't you your speech by any chance?

Bertrand—No, sir; still if I dared I would say a word or two; but I'm afraid of putting my foot in it; for I am only a plain peasant.

Edouard—A speech, a speech! I know that what you say will be good fun. Silence, Gentlemen, silence! Listen to Monsieur Bertrand. [*He raps on the table.*]

Bertrand—What I wished to say is very simple. I wish to say, that saving your presence, we are playing like children. Let us leave sermons to the priests. We don't need so many fine speeches to agree upon our course of action. When I was with Jean de Chouan he never had a good deal to say to us. He would say, "How would it be if we surprised the Blues at the Herbages Farm?" We would say, "Yes." He would say, "Have you cartridges? Have you fresh flint in your guns?" We would say, "Yes." He would say, "Let us drink a glass, forward march, vive le roi!" We would clink glasses, and march off.

Edouard—Bravo! Morbleu, Monsieur Bertrand is the one to carry off the prize for oratory.

Bertrand—When I came here I had no idea that you needed all these grand speeches to stir you up to do what is right. I merely thought that you were going to set things in motion. I thought, for instance, that I might be told, "Sans-Peur, you are to surprise the station of gendarmes at X——." "You, M. de Machicoulis, saving your presence, you are to try to lay hands on the Prefect"—just like that, with no more ceremony. I had brought cartridges and I had filled my powder-flask.

Baron de Machicoulis—The deuce! How he slashes into things.

The Count—I thank Heaven we have not yet come to that.

Count de Fierdonjon—My friend, you are not with Jean de Chouan's men now; you are with educated gentlemen, which is very different. Listen in silence and respect to what you cannot understand.

Bertrand—I am quite willing, but——

Marquis de Malespine—We are not asking your opinion.

The Countess—Gentlemen, what do you think of leaving your addresses for another occasion? Just now we have so many things to regulate. You have just elected your President, but we have many important points to decide upon. For instance, what is to be the name of your society? We must have a name by which to be called when History speaks of us.

Count de Fierdonjon—Well, History will say, "The Count de Fierdonjon, M. des Tournelles——"

The Count—My wife means it would be well if all persons who co-operate in this society bore a generic, a collective name.

Edouard—Ah! a collective name; that makes me think of my Latin, *Turba ruit* or *ruunt*.

Count de Fierdonion—Very well, and why not call ourselves "The Real Gentlemen"?

Edouard—No; we should have a name that sounds well, like those in a melodrama, "The Knights of the Swan," "The Free Judges." Why should we not call ourselves "The Knights of Death"? It is imposing and harmonious.

Chevalier de Thimbray—Why not? As a matter of fact it is rather an imposing name.

The Count—Oh! It is a little too terrible; I should prefer——

The Countess—Let us rather choose a name that reminds us of the object of our conspiracy. "The Friends of Misfortune." Does that name meet with your approval? Do you not indeed espouse the cause of misfortune? This name will gather around us all noble hearts.

Edouard—Good suggestion—carried!

Bertrand—"The Friends of Misfortune." So when we cry "Qui Vive," and they don't answer "Friends of Misfortune" —I give them a shot?

Edouard—Father Bertrand hits right out. You have seen something of soldiering, eh?

Bertrand—Why, sir, for years I did nothing else.

The Countess—Bertrand fought in the war of La Vendée. He was major in the royal army.

Edouard—Yes, yes, the war of the Chouans—war of skirmishes—behind hedges, shots at laggards. Peste! a pretty war that —men had long lives in those days.

Bertrand—That depended. There are lots of young men, and of old men too, who would have been strong and well today if they had not been killed in that pretty war. There are some men who are astonished to see their corn growing so high in some places that I know—it is thanks to the men who are buried there. I, with my own eyes, sir, have seen more than one engagement in which those who escaped owed a thumping big candle to the Holy Virgin. One day on the downs of Gros-Sablon there were two hundred of us who met an equal number of Blues. We defeated them—but in the evening there were only forty-five of us at rations.

Edouard—No doubt. It must have been hotly contested. How many of the vanquished were there left?

Bertrand—Not one.

Edouard—Of a truth, that wasn't bad.

The Count—If these gentlemen begin talking war, we shall never get anywhere.

The Countess—The Friends of Misfortune must wear some emblem by means of which they may be recognized.

Baron de Machicoulis—By the police? The dickens, no!

The Countess—I means a hidden emblem. For instance, each one of us, of you gentlemen, would wear a dagger of a certain design.

Edouard—Yes, yes, a dagger! To begin with, there can be no conspiracy without daggers. The dagger of vengeance—the mysterious steel— Have you seen the melodrama of the "Free Judges"?

Count de Fierdonjon—Yes, a dagger. I don't see anything out of the way about that, and then it might be useful.

Bertrand—It's a good weapon, all the same, without seeming so. You have to give a down stroke *(making a gesture as if* *striking*). Excuse me, sir, like that—so that the blood won't flow, and will smother you in no time.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS—Horrors! We don't wish to assassinate anyone—we don't need your lessons.

BERTRAND—Then why?

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY—It is a mark of distinction, but French gentlemen do not use such weapons.

THE COUNT—There 's a police regulation forbidding it. It would be dangerous.

BERTRAND—Still, Lescure, Charette, la Rochejaquelin, all those gentlemen had them in their day, and anyone who would have dared to lay a hand on them would have found out that they knew how to use them.

THE COUNTESS (*aside*)—This man's talk really makes me shudder. (*Aloud*) The handle of the daggers should be white—our colour—and of ivory, or mother of pearl, inlaid with silver. I shall prepare a design and on the blade we shall have the word "Fidelity" engraved in Latin. That would be in good taste, don't you think so?

EDOUARD—My word! Hurray for my cousin and conspiracies. She is splendid at them. Don't worry about your daggers, my dear colleagues; I am going to Spain; that is where they make the very finest thing to be had in the way of daggers. Even the women keep them hidden in their bodices or garters. An officer of the Dragoons who has just come back from there has been telling me all about it. Really, now, no joke, you have to be careful about them; they are treacherous as the devil.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY—Your friend, sir, must have visited those regions, since he has made there all these fine discoveries.

BERTRAND—Bah! Keep your ivory and pearl daggers. They are all very fine for show; but if it be blood of a Blue that you want to let, give me a good strong weapon like this (*he draws out a great knife*). It is rough-looking, but it is not dear. One day I stumbled over a stone and fell flat. An officer of the Blues put his knee on my stomach, and raising his sabre, called upon me to surrender. I said to him that Jean de Chouan used to say, "Not much danger of it!" and I planted my dagger in his mouth. And sure as I am speaking he swallowed it, as if it were a spoonful of soup. Look! you can still see the dents of his teeth on the blade.

THE COUNTESS—Oh, do take away this horrid dagger. I fancy that I see it still dripping with blood.

THE COUNT—Enough of that, my good fellow. That is not the matter of interest. Let us settle down to business.

BERTRAND—Well, then, when shall we sound the tocsin?

BARON DE MACHICOULIS—The tocsin! Of what are you thinking? And with the gendarmes and the military station at——

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE—And the Prefect, who would send us all to prison.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY—The fellow is possessed.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—The fruit is not yet ripe, my good man.

BERTRAND—You would not dare to pick it, even if it were rotten.

THE COUNT—Now that our society is somewhat organized, what shall be our first undertaking? [*Profound silence.*]

BARON DE MACHICOULIS—Our best plan would be to quietly exert our influence upon the minds of those around us to alienate them from the usurper. If we could only find some way of secretly printing some brief considerations upon——

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE—My address might be printed at the same time.

THE COUNT—And mine, too, when I find it. I can't believe that it is lost.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY—The trouble would be to find a printer who would be perfectly reliable.

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE—If worst came to worst, we could circulate manuscript copies.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—Yes, but people know our writing.

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE—If the Countess were willing to take the trouble. A woman's writing would never be under suspicion.

THE COUNT—Don't for a moment think of it. Everyone knows my wife's writing.

CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY—Another trouble is that few of the people hereabout can read. [*Silence.*]

BERTRAND—Well, you listen for a minute. I see that things are going badly, and that amongst us are very few who are willing to risk their necks for the good cause. An idea occurs to me. When I say that it occurs to me, I mean that it occurs to me again, for I have very often thought of it. I am nothing but a poor peasant, I am growing old, and I am no longer of much use—nevertheless——

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—Nevertheless you are still very well able to kill partridge wherever you find them.

BERTRAND—I don't deny I still am a good enough shot. Now then, I was thinking: we must do something. What keeps our king from coming back is the other who has taken his place. And yet that other is not the devil. His skin is not so tough as an oaken plank, and I have seen chaps who cut through at a single blow an oaken plank two inches thick.

THE COUNT—What are you driving at?

BERTRAND—This is it. I was thinking: I am old, yes, but in spite of that I support my wife and boy. If I die they would be left begging for bread. If you gentlemen would sign an agreement, promising them 1,200 livres after my death, here is what I would promise to do: I will set out for Paris, I will try to see the Emperor, and if I can get within arm's length of him he is a dead man. If I fail—well, another can do what I wished to do. They will shoot me; but I shall have the consolation that at least my wife and boy will not lack for bread.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—Morbleu! It would be enough to get us all shot.

EDOUARD—He is simply possessed. Assassinate the Emperor! It is worse than a Spanish monk.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS (*in a whisper to* COUNTESS DES TOURNELLES)—Do you think this scamp is a spy by any chance?

BERTRAND—The agreement, of course, would be put in safe-keeping. It would not be shown until after my death.

THE COUNTESS—This man frightens me quite out of my wits. What a terrible desperado he is.

THE COUNT—My good fellow, your proposal is certainly most remarkable; we should need to have in you the most complete confidence——

BERTRAND—Parbleu! you only risk 1,200 livres among you all, and I risk my neck.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—Yes, but my fine fellow, supposing you once got to Paris, and let the police bribe you to tell everything?

MARQUIS DE MALESPINE—And the promise of a pension would be evidence against us.

BERTRAND—Do you think then that I could be guilty of informing against you? Gentlemen, I am going to let you see the kind of man I am. (*He unbuttons his coat, and draws out from a leather bag hung on his breast, a letter which he throws on the table.*) Read this paper; you can read, so read it!

EDOUARD—This paper is a bit greasy, but never mind. (*Reads*): "To the Lieutenant-General of His Majesty's Armies: I hereby certify to all to whom it may concern, that Joseph Bertrand, known as Sans-Peur, Major in our army, has always shown himself trusty and brave upon every occasion. Of his courage and devotion not enough can be said. In token of which we have given him this present certificate, hoping that it may at some time prove useful to him. (Signed) Henri de la Rochejaquelin. At the General Quarters of S—y, 179—."

BERTRAND—Who amongst you can show a paper signed by an honest man, who answers for your honour and fidelity?

THE COUNTESS (*looking out in the direction of the court-yard*)—Good Heavens, what do I see?

THE COUNT—What is it next? A spider?

EDOUARD—A gendarme on horseback is coming into the court-yard.

ALL (*rising*)—A gendarme!

THE COUNT—We are discovered. We are undone.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS—Des Tournelles—Madame—hide us. Help us to escape—you are responsible for us. We are in your house.

THE COUNTESS—What can we do?

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—At least you will attest that I came here only against my will, and absolutely ignorant of what was going to be done.

BARON DE MACHICOULIS, MARQUIS DE MALESPINE, CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY—And I too.

THE COUNT—Quite on the contrary; you led me astray and dragged me on. Your address proves it.

ALL—Oh, our wretched addresses—(*They tear them up and throw them into the fire.*)

THE COUNTESS—Edouard, don't forsake me.

BERTRAND—No danger of it. There is only one gendarme, you say?

THE COUNT—I see another at the main door. The house is surrounded.

ALL—Surrounded!

EDOUARD—And how do you know this gendarme has come to arrest you? It is some notice——

BARON DE MACHICOULIS—Yes, a notice from the Prefect's to arrest us.

BERTRAND—I have a double-barrelled gun. There is no danger, as Jean de Chouan used to say.

THE COUNTESS—Go out of this little door, and get into the garden. Here is the key of the back gate. If only it is not guarded! At least let us swear together that we will never betray one another.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—Quick, give me the key. (*He goes out with the* BARON DE

MACHICOULIS *and the* CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY.)

THE COUNTESS (*to the* COUNT, *who tries to run away too*)—Where are you going? Stay here; you should not go out of the house.

EDOUARD—You get excited for no reason.

THE COUNTESS (*to* EDOUARD)—Speak to this soldier. Your épaulettes will command his respect.

BERTRAND (*examining the charge of his gun, to his dog*)—Easy, Médor, easy, old boy!

THE COUNTESS—Sans-Peur, in Heaven's name, no bloodshed here. I should die.

BERTRAND (*coldly*)—I shall not shoot until you make sign to me.

SCENE XII

The Same. A GENDARME.

THE GENDARME—Monsieur des Tournelles. This is the place, is it not? A letter from the Prefect.

EDOUARD—Give it to me. Here it is, Cousin Mélanie.

THE GENDARME—Will you sign a receipt and put down the time?

THE COUNTESS (*to the* COUNT)—Sign it, my dear. Edouard, give this gentleman a glass of wine, he must be thirsty. No doubt he rode over very quickly.

EDOUARD (*filling a glass for him*)—Here, you haven't wine like this at the canteen.

THE GENDARME—Oh, no, lieutenant. (*He drinks.*) To your health, Madame, to your health, Sir, to the health of you all. Hello, Father Sans-Peur—and so you are here. Be careful; the brigadier says that if he catches you again shooting without a permit to carry arms he'll clap you into jail.

BERTRAND—Not much danger.

THE COUNT (*to the* GENDARME)—Here is the receipt.

THE GENDARME—Many thanks for your kindness, Madame. [*He goes out.*]

SCENE XIII

The COUNT, *the* COUNTESS, EDOUARD, BERTRAND.

THE COUNT (*to the* COUNTESS)—Open this letter. I dare not read it.

THE COUNTESS (*opens the letter and hastily runs through it*)—Oh, heavens!

THE COUNT (*trembling*)—Alas!

THE COUNTESS—Can it be possible? You have been named Chamberlain to the Empress.

THE COUNT—Can it be true? Oh, joy!

THE COUNTESS (*coldly*)—The appointment is made without your having asked for it. [EDOUARD *bursts out laughing.*]

THE COUNT (*in a whisper*)—What have we been doing, and what guilty aberrations!

THE COUNTESS—Hush! Let us forget this day. Bertrand, my good man, come to see us now and then. Never hesitate to shoot over our grounds, and here, take this to buy a new bonnet for your wife. [*She offers him money.*]

BERTRAND (*refusing it*)—My wife has no need of a bonnet.

THE COUNTESS—You can count upon our discretion.

BERTRAND (*with a scornful smile*)—I see that you are counting on more.

THE COUNTESS—Yes, my dear Bertrand, I count upon it. You are willing?

BERTRAND—You are quite right. Come to think it all over, on the whole it is better to shoot partridges. Countess, gentlemen, your servant—Médor, come here, sir. [*He goes out.*]

EDOUARD (*calling out at the window*)—Halloa there, gentlemen, where are you? Good news; it was a false alarm! . . . Come back. Ha! ha! ha! There's someone who has fallen into the pond—he is covered with mud— Come back, come back—Cousin Mélanie, you will use your influence for me at court. You will tell the Emperor of the love and respect for him which I have expressed.

THE COUNTESS—Edouard!

THE COUNT—What can we say to them?

THE COUNTESS—Just leave it to me.

SCENE XIV

The COUNT, *the* COUNTESS, EDOUARD, *the* BARON DE MACHICOULIS, *the* COUNT DE FIERDONJON, *the* MARQUIS DE MALESPINE, *the* CHEVALIER DE THIMBRAY. (*The* COUNT DE FIERDONJON *is all wet and covered with mud.*)

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—Ah, curse the house! I shall be crippled for the rest of my days! You say that there is no danger?

THE COUNTESS (*to the* COUNT DE FIERDONJON)—What is the trouble, Count?

BARON DE MACHICOULIS—He was running and fell into the pond. The key which he was holding in his hand is at the bottom of the water. But for that we should have been in the open country. But did the gendarme arrest Bertrand, since we don't see him here?

THE COUNTESS—No, but we have just received news, which to us is very sad. It has quite upset our plans.

COUNT DE FIERDONJON—Is that all?

The Countess—An unlooked-for blow has fallen upon us; we must leave at once for Paris. My husband has just been appointed Chamberlain to the Empress; and as, if he refused, he would compromise himself, as well as his friends——

Edouard—He is going to accept, he is going to sacrifice himself. You can see how he is quite overcome, my poor old cousin.

Count de Fierdonjon (*aside*)—Chamberlain to the Empress. It is a good appointment. (*Aloud*) Could you let me have a change of clothing? [*He goes out.*]

Baron de Machicoulis—I see that there is nothing more for me to do here.

The Countess (*taking leave of him*)—Good-bye, Baron; we must hold ourselves in reserve for happier times.

Chevalier de Thimbray (*to the* Count) —By the way, my son is going to enlist soon. He is studying at Paris, and is a fine fellow. Do you not think that with your influence——[*He talks to him in an undertone.*]

Marquis de Malespine—Since you are going to Paris, may I hope that you will be so kind as to speak a word in my favour, to the Judge, about this confounded lawsuit which——? [*He talks to the* Count *in an undertone.*]

The Count—You may rest assured, my dear friends, that I will never forget you—and if some day— Alas!—my good friends, good-bye. [*The* Marquis *and the* Chevalier *go out.*]

Edouard—Well, Cousin Mélanie, when is my conversion to take place?

The Countess—Now, just let me take charge of things. I intend that inside of two months you are to be Captain in the Guards. (*To the* Count) My dear, you must leave for Paris tomorrow, and thank His Majesty for this mark of favour. I shall follow close after you, as soon as my court wardrobe is ready. Edouard will take me to Paris.

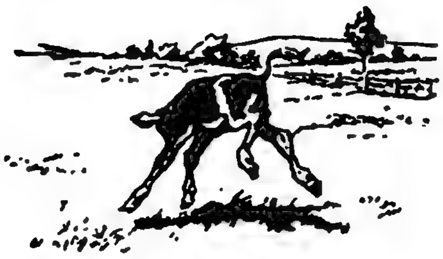
Edouard—Yes, Cousin Mélanie, I will take you to Paris. (*Aside*) Quick-step!

Dance, My Heart!

By KABIR

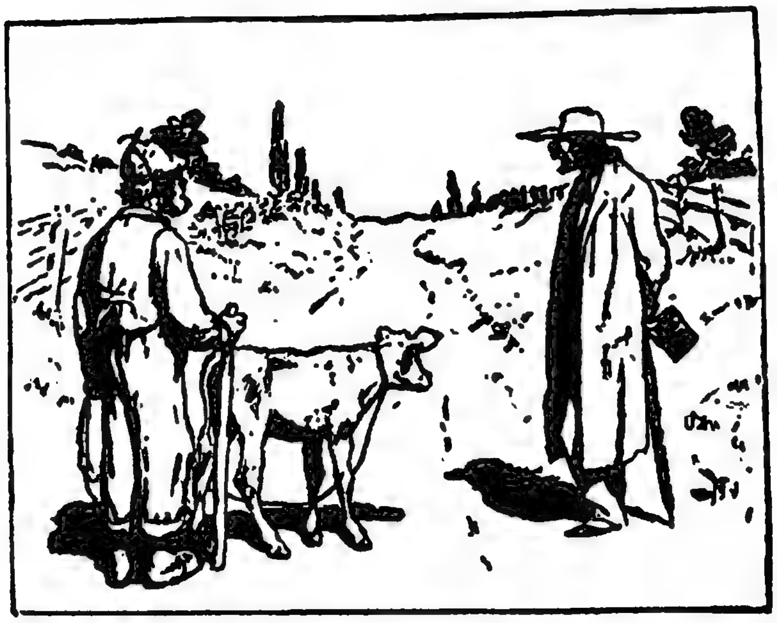
Translated by Rabindranath Tagore

DANCE, my heart! dance to-day with joy.
The strains of love fill the days and the nights with music, and the world is listening to its melodies:
Mad with joy, life and death dance to the rhythm of this music. The hills and the sea and the earth dance. The world of man dances in laughter and tears.
Why put on the robe of the monk, and live aloof from the world in lonely pride?
Behold! my heart dances in the delight of a hundred arts; and the Creator is well pleased.

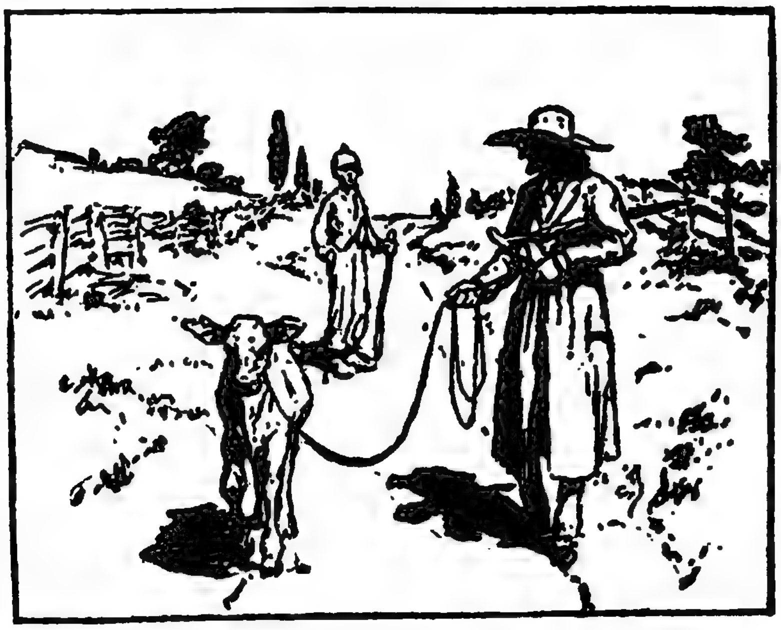


The Humane Man and the Bull Calf

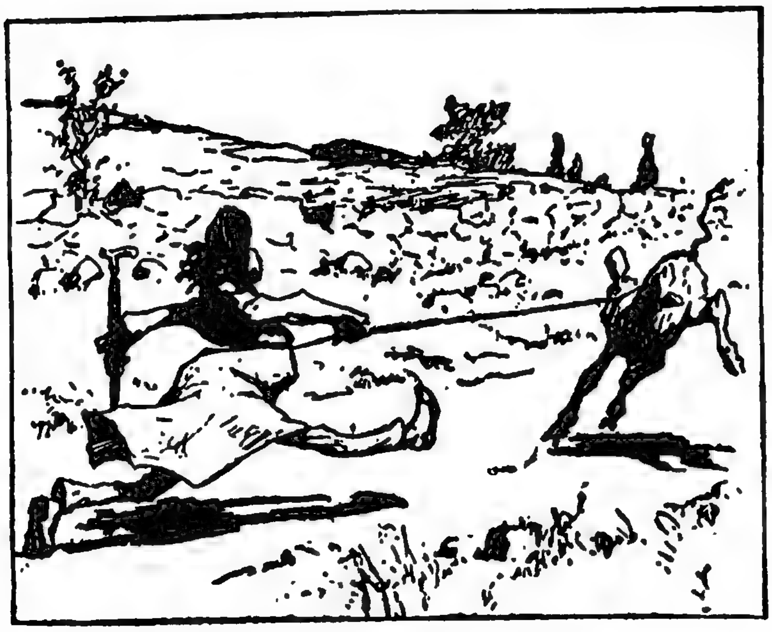
By A. B. FROST



"Veal of that pretty creature! Never—"



"I will take him home to the children."



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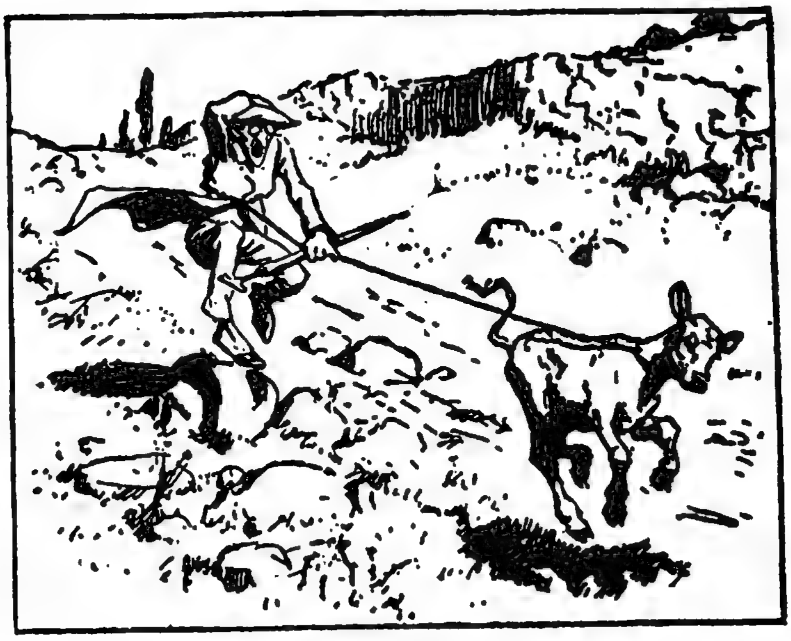

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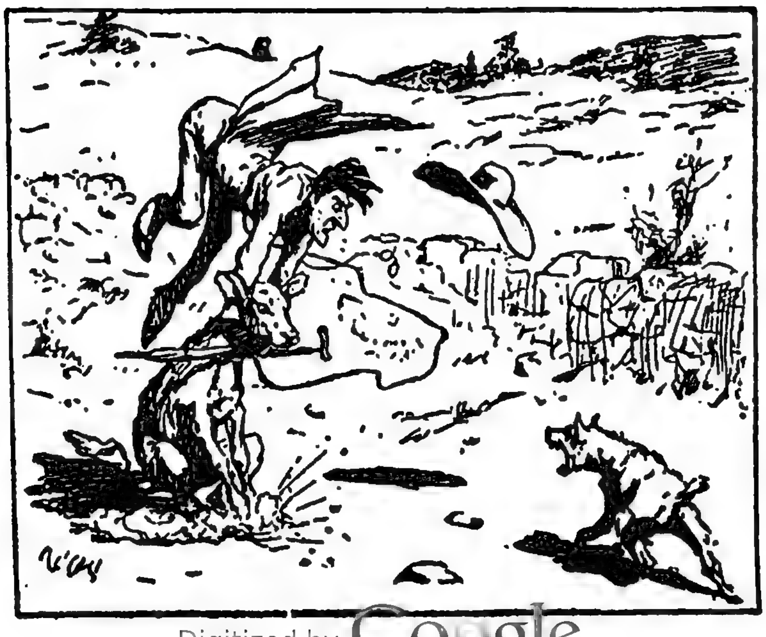

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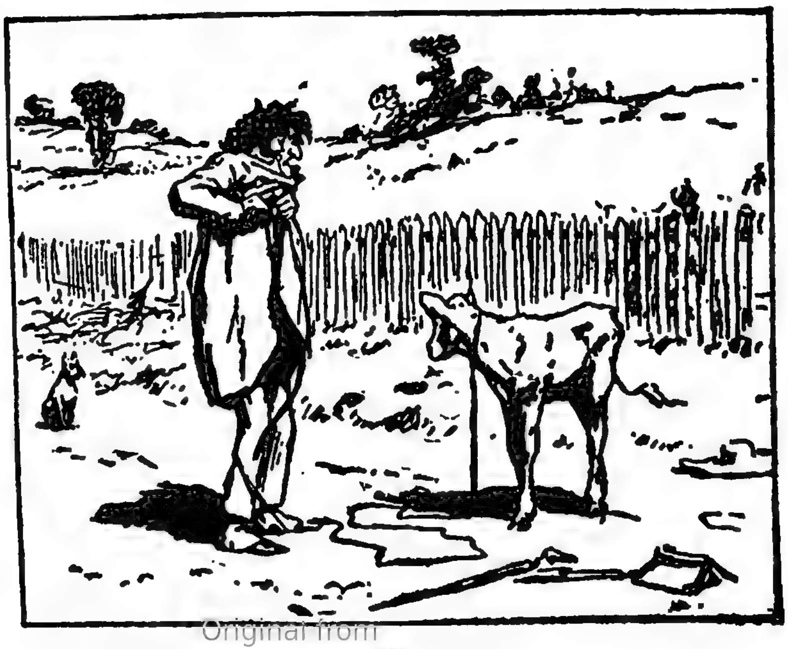

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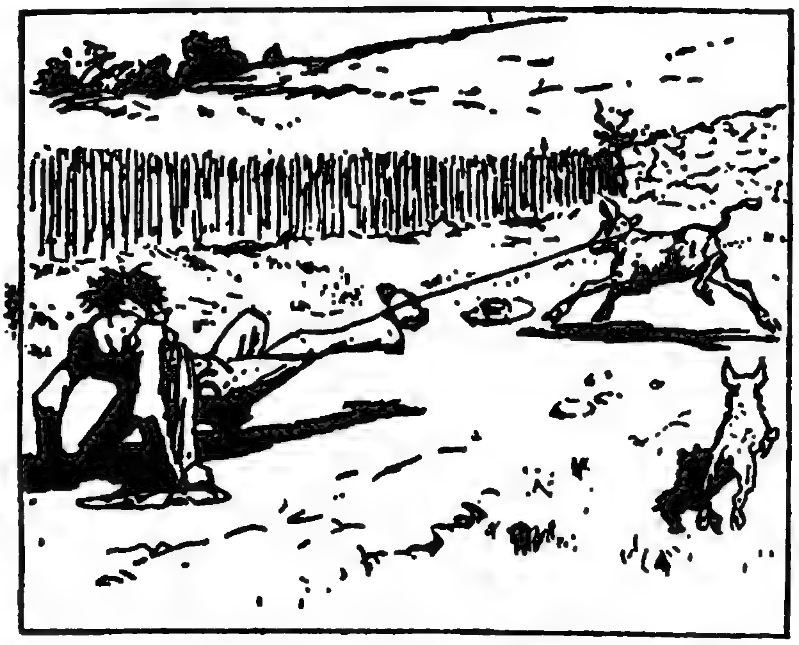

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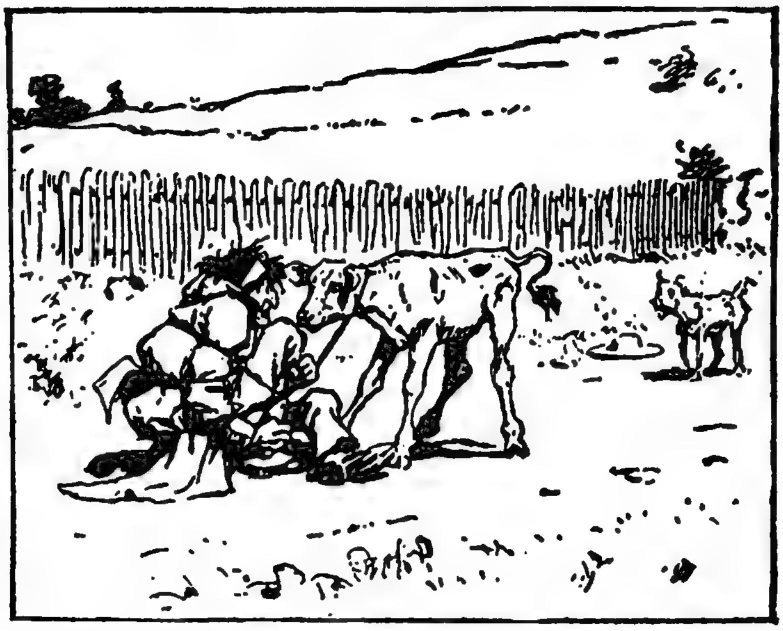

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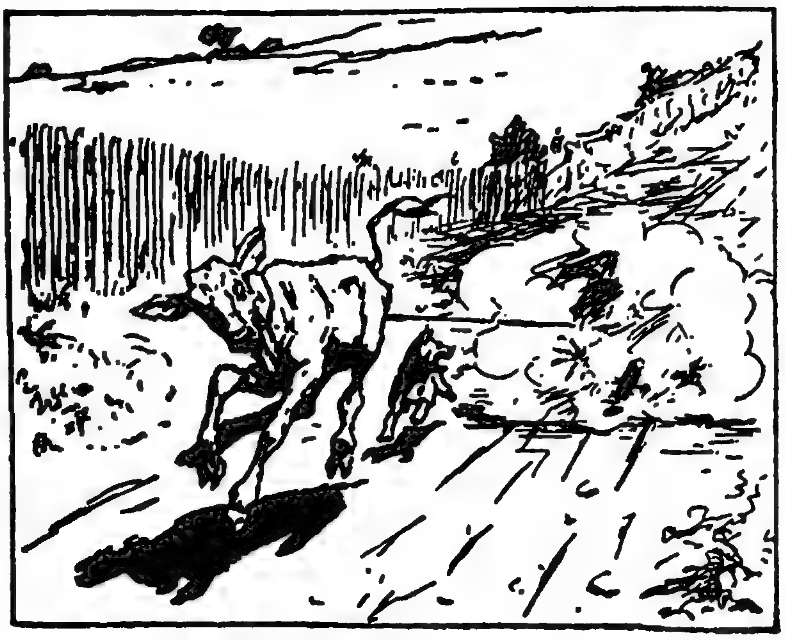

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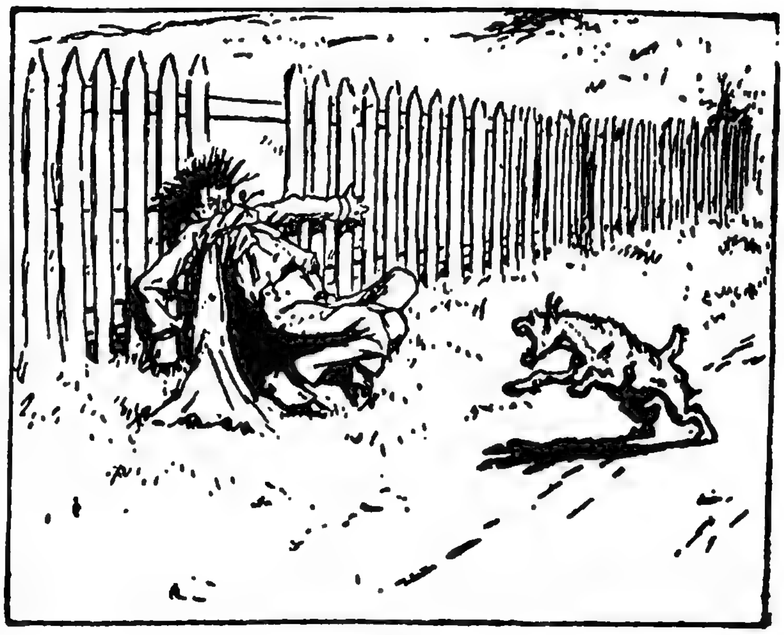

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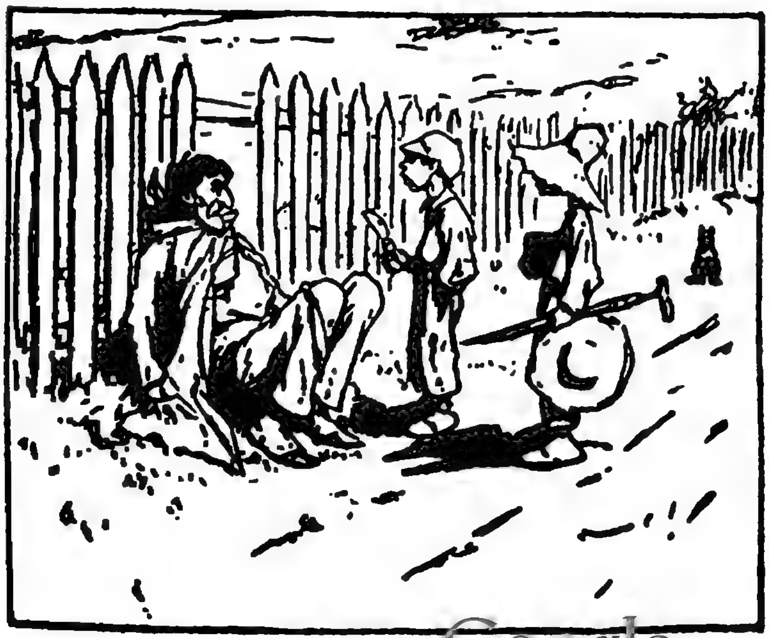

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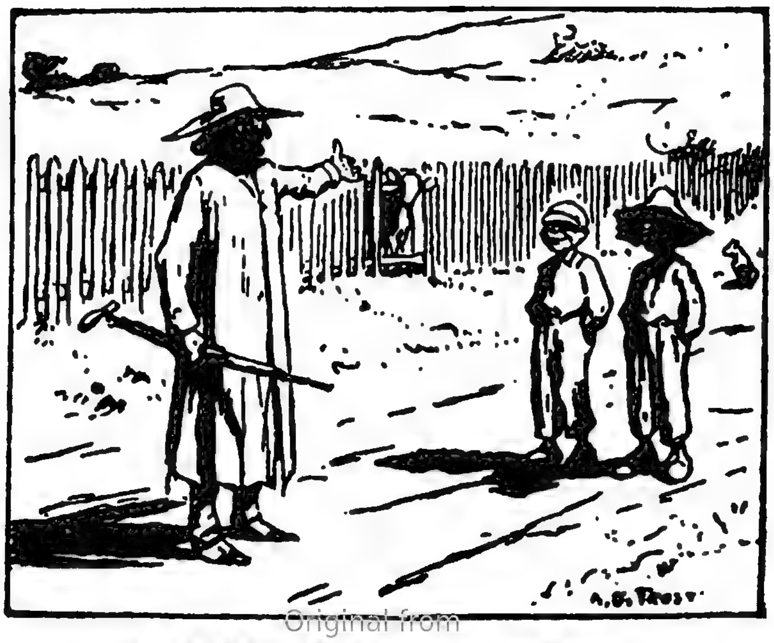


"[illegible]—but fed, [illegible]."

El Verdugo

By HONORÉ DE BALZAC

de Balzac

MIDNIGHT had just sounded from the belfry tower of the little town of Menda. A young French officer, leaning over the parapet of the long terrace at the further end of the castle gardens, seemed to be unusually absorbed in deep thought for one who led the reckless life of a soldier; but it must be admitted that never was the hour, the scene, and the night more favourable to meditation.

The blue dome of the cloudless sky of Spain was overhead; he was looking out over the coy windings of a lovely valley lit by the uncertain starlight and the soft radiance of the moon. The officer, leaning against an orange tree in blossom, could also see, a hundred feet below him, the town of Menda, which seemed to nestle for shelter from the north wind at the foot of the crags on which the castle itself was built. He turned his head and caught sight of the sea; the moonlit waves made a broad frame of silver for the landscape.

There were lights in the castle windows. The mirth and movement of a ball, the sounds of the violins, the laughter of the officers and their partners in the dance was borne towards him, and blended with the far-off murmur of the waves. The cool night had a certain bracing effect upon his frame, wearied as he had been by the heat of the day. He seemed to bathe in the air, made fragrant by the strong, sweet scent of flowers and of aromatic trees in the gardens.

The castle of Menda belonged to a Spanish grandee, who was living in it at that time with his family. All through the evening the oldest daughter of the house had watched the officer with such a wistful interest that the Spanish lady's compassionate eyes might well have set the young Frenchman dreaming. Clara was beautiful; and although she had three brothers and a sister, the broad lands of the Marqués de Légañès appeared to be sufficient warrant for Victor Marchand's belief that the young lady would have a splendid dowry. But how could he dare to imagine that the most fanatical believer in blue blood in all Spain would give his daughter to the son of a grocer in Paris? Moreover, the French were hated. It was because the Marquis had been suspected of an attempt to raise the country in favour of Ferdinand VII. that General G——, who governed the province, had stationed Victor Marchand's battalion in the little town of Menda to overawe the neighbouring districts which received the Marqués de Légañès's word as law. A recent dispatch from Marshal Ney had given ground for fear that the English might ere long effect a landing on the coast, and had indicated the Marquis as being in correspondence with the Cabinet in London.

In spite, therefore, of the welcome with which the Spaniards had received Victor Marchand and his soldiers, that officer was always on his guard. As he went towards the terrace, where he had just surveyed the town and the districts confided to his charge, he had been asking himself what construction he ought to put upon the friendliness which the Marquis had invariably shown him, and how to reconcile the apparent tranquillity of the country with his General's uneasiness. But a moment later these thoughts were driven from his mind by the instinct of caution and very legitimate curiosity. It had just struck him that there was a very fair number of lights in the town below. Although it was the Feast of Saint James, he himself had issued orders that very morning that all lights must be put out in the town at the hour prescribed by military regulations. The castle alone had been excepted in this order. Plainly here and there he saw the gleam of bayonets, where his own men were at their accustomed posts; but in the town there was a solemn silence, and not a sign that the Spaniards had given themselves up to the intoxication of a festival. He tried vainly for a while to explain this breach of the regulations on the part of the inhabitants; the mystery seemed but so much the more obscure because he had left instructions with some of his officers to make the rounds of the town.

With the impetuosity of youth, he was about to spring through a gap in the wall preparatory to a rapid scramble down the rocks, thinking to reach a small guardhouse at the nearest entrance into the town more quickly than by the beaten track, when a faint sound stopped him. He fancied that he could hear the light footstep of a woman along the graveled garden walk. He turned his head and saw no one; for one moment his eyes were dazzled by the wonderful brightness of the sea, the next he saw a sight so ominous that he stood stock-still with amazement, thinking that his senses must be deceiving him. The white moonbeams lighted the horizon, so that he could distinguish the sails of ships still a considerable distance out at sea. A shudder ran through him; he tried to persuade himself that this was some optical delusion of moonlight on the waves; and even as he made the attempt, a hoarse voice called to him by name. The officer glanced at the gap in the wall; saw a soldier's head slowly emerge from it, and knew the grenadier whom he had ordered to accompany him to the castle.

"Is that you, Commandant?"

"Yes. What is it?" returned the young officer in a low voice. A kind of presentiment warned him to act cautiously.

"Those beggars down there are creeping about like worms; and, by your leave, I came as quickly as I could to report my little reconnoitering expedition."

"Go on," answered Victor Marchand.

"I have just been following a man from the castle who came round this way with a lantern in his hand. A lantern is a suspicious matter with a vengeance! I don't imagine that there was any need for that good Christian to be lighting tapers at this time of night. Says I to myself, 'They mean to gobble us up!' and I set myself to dogging his heels; and that is how I found out that there is a pile of fagots, sir, two or three steps away from here."

Suddenly a dreadful shriek rang through the town below, and cut the man short. A light flashed in the Commandant's face, and the poor grenadier dropped down with a bullet through his head. Ten paces away a bonfire flared up like a conflagration. The sounds of music and laughter ceased all at once in the ballroom; the silence of death, broken only by groans, succeeded to the rhythmical murmur of the festival. Then the roar of the cannon sounded from across the white plain of the sea.

A cold sweat broke out on the young officer's forehead. He had left his sword behind. He knew that his men had been murdered, and that the English were about to land. He knew that if he lived he would be dishonoured; he saw himself summoned before a court-martial. For a moment his eyes measured the depth of the valley; the next, just as he was about to spring down, Clara's hand caught his.

"Fly!" she cried. "My brothers are coming after me to kill you. Down yonder at the foot of the cliff you will find Juanito's Andalusian. Go!"

She thrust him away. The young man gazed at her in dull bewilderment; but obeying the instinct of self-preservation, which never deserts even the bravest, he rushed across the park in the direction pointed out to him, springing from rock to rock in places unknown to any save the goats. He heard Clara calling to her brothers to pursue him; he heard the footsteps of the murderers; again and again he heard their balls whistling about his ears; but he reached the foot of the cliff, found the horse, mounted, and fled with lightning speed.

A few hours later the young officer reached General G——'s quarters, and found him at dinner with the staff.

"I put my life in your hands!" cried the haggard and exhausted Commandant.

He sank into a seat, and told his story. It was received with an appalling silence.

"It seems to me that you are more to be pitied than blamed," the terrible General said at last. "You are not answerable for the Spaniard's crimes, and unless the Marshal decides otherwise, I acquit you."

These words brought but cold comfort to the unfortunate officer.

"When the Emperor comes to hear about it!" he cried.

"Oh, he will be for having you shot," said the General, "but we shall see. Now we will say no more about this," he added severely, "except to plan a revenge that shall strike terror into this country, where they carry on war like savages."

An hour later a whole regiment, a detachment of cavalry, and a convoy of artillery were upon the road. The General and Victor marched at the head of the column. The soldiers had been told of the fate of their comrades, and their rage knew no bounds.

The distance between headquarters and the town of Menda was crossed at a well-nigh miraculous speed. Whole villages by the way were found to be under arms; every one of the wretched hamlets was surrounded, and their inhabitants decimated.

It so chanced that the English vessels still lay out at sea, and were no nearer the shore, a fact inexplicable until it was known afterwards that they were artillery transports which had outsailed the rest of the fleet. So the townsmen of Menda, left without the assistance on which they had reckoned when the sails of the English appeared, were surrounded by French troops almost before they had had time to strike a blow. This struck such terror into them that they offered to surrender at discretion. An impulse of devotion, no isolated instance in the history of the Peninsula, led the actual slayers of the French to offer to give themselves up; seeking in this way to save the town, for from the General's reputation for cruelty it was feared that he would give Menda over to the flames, and put the whole population to the sword. General G—— took their offer, stipulating that every soul in the castle from the lowest servant to the Marquis should likewise be given up to him. These terms being accepted, the General promised to spare the lives of the rest of the townsmen, and to prohibit his soldiers from pillaging or setting fire to the town. A heavy contribution was levied, and the wealthiest inhabitants were taken as hostages to guarantee payment within twenty-four hours.

The General took every necessary precaution for the safety of his troops, provided for the defense of the place, and refused to billet his men in the houses of the town. After they had bivouacked, he went up to the castle and entered it as a conqueror. The whole family of Léganès and their household were gagged, shut up in the great ballroom, and closely watched. From the windows it was easy to see the whole length of the terrace above the town.

The staff was established in an adjoining gallery, where the General forthwith held a council as to the best means of preventing the landing of the English. An aide-de-camp was dispatched to Marshal Ney, orders were issued to plant batteries along the coast, and then the General and his staff turned their attention to their prisoners. The two hundred Spaniards given up by the townsfolk were shot down then and there upon the terrace. And after this military execution, the General gave orders to erect gibbets to the number of the prisoners in the ballroom in the same place, and to send for the hangman out of the town. Victor took advantage of the interval before dinner to pay a visit to the prisoners. He soon came back to the General.

"I am come in haste," he faltered out, "to ask a favor."

"*You!*" exclaimed the General, with bitter irony in his tones.

"Alas!" answered Victor, "it is a sorry favor. The Marquis has seen them erecting the gallows, and hopes that you will commute the punishment for his family; he entreats you to have the nobles beheaded."

"Granted," said the General.

"He further asks that they may be allowed the consolations of religion, and that they may be unbound; they give you their word that they will not attempt to escape."

"That I permit," said the General, "but you are answerable for them."

"The old noble offers you all that he has if you will pardon his youngest son."

"Really!" cried the Commander. "His property is forfeit already to King Joseph." He paused; a contemptuous thought set wrinkles in his forehead, as he added, "I will do better than they ask. I understand what he means by that last request of his. Very good. Let him hand down his name to posterity; but whenever it is mentioned, all Spain shall remember his treason and its punishment! I will give the fortune and his life to any one of the sons who will do the executioner's office. . . . There, don't talk any more about them to me."

Dinner was ready. The officers sat down to satisfy an appetite whetted by hunger. Only one among them was absent from the table—that one was Victor Marchand. After long hesitation, he went to the ballroom, and heard the last sighs of the proud house of Léganès. He looked sadly at the scene before him. Only last night, in this very room, he had seen their faces whirled past him in the waltz, and he shuddered to think that those girlish heads with those of the three young brothers must fall in a brief space by the executioner's sword. There sat the father and mother, their three sons and two daughters, perfectly motionless, bound to their gilded chairs. Eight serving men stood with their hands tied behind them. These fifteen prisoners, under sentence of death, exchanged grave glances; it was difficult to read the thoughts that filled them from their eyes, but profound resignation and regret that their enterprise should have failed so completely was written on more than one brow.

The impassive soldiers who guarded them respected the grief of their bitter enemies. A gleam of curiosity lighted up all faces when Victor came in. He gave orders that the condemned prisoners should be unbound, and himself unfastened the cords that held Clara a prisoner. She smiled mournfully at him. The officer could not refrain from lightly touching the young girl's arm; he could not help admiring her dark hair, her slender waist. She was a true daughter of Spain, with a Spanish complexion, a Spaniard's eyes, blacker than the raven's wing beneath their long, curving lashes.

"Did you succeed?" she asked, with a mournful smile, in which a certain girlish charm still lingered.

Victor could not repress a groan. He looked from the faces of the three brothers to Clara, and again at the three young Spaniards. The first, the oldest of the family, was a man of thirty. He was short, and somewhat ill-made; he looked haughty and proud, but a certain distinction was not lacking in his bearing, and he was apparently no stranger to the delicacy of feeling for which in olden times the chivalry of Spain was famous. His name was Juanito. The second son, Felipe, was about twenty years of age; he was like his sister Clara; and the youngest was a child of eight. In the features of the little Manuel a painter would have discerned something of that Roman steadfastness which David has given to the children's faces in his Republican genre pictures. The old Marquis, with his white hair, might have come down from some canvas of Murillo's. Victor threw back his head in despair after this survey; how should one of these accept the General's offer! Nevertheless he ventured to intrust it to Clara. A shudder ran through the Spanish girl, but she recovered herself almost instantly, and knelt before her father.

"Father," she said, "bid Juanito swear to obey the commands that you shall give him, and we shall be content."

The Marquesa trembled with hope, but as she leant towards her husband and learned Clara's hideous secret, the mother fainted away. Juanito understood it all, and leapt up like a caged lion. Victor took it upon himself to dismiss the soldiers, after receiving an assurance of entire submission from the Marquis. The servants were led away and given over to the hangman and their fate. When only Victor remained on guard in the room, the old Marqués de Léganès rose to his feet.

"Juanito," he said. For an answer Juanito bowed his head in a way that meant refusal; he sank down into his chair, and fixed tearless eyes upon his father and mother in an intolerable gaze. Clara went over to him and sat on his knee; she put her arms about him, and pressed kisses on his eyelids, saying gaily—

"Dear Juanito, if you but knew how sweet death at your hands will be to me! I shall not be compelled to submit to the hateful touch of the hangman's fingers. You will snatch me away from the evils to come and . . . Dear, kind Juanito, you could not bear the thought of my belonging to anyone—well, then?"

The velvet eyes gave Victor a burning glance; she seemed to try to awaken in Juanito's heart his hatred for the French.

"Take courage," said his brother Felipe, "or our well-nigh royal line will be extinct."

Suddenly Clara sprang to her feet. The group round Juanito fell back, and the son who had rebelled with such good reason was confronted with his aged father.

"Juanito, I command you!" said the Marquis solemnly.

The young Count gave no sign, and his father fell on his knees; Clara, Manuel, and Felipe unconsciously followed his example, stretching out suppliant hands to him who must save their family from oblivion, and seeming to echo their father's words.

"Can it be that you lack the fortitude of a Spaniard and true sensibility, my son? Do you mean to keep me on my knees? What right have you to think of your own life and of your own sufferings? Is this my son, madame?" the old Marquis added, turning to his wife.

"He will consent to it," cried the mother in agony of soul. She had seen a slight contraction of Juanito's brows which she, his mother, alone understood.

Mariquita, the second daughter, knelt, with her slender clinging arms about her mother; the hot tears fell from her eyes, and her little brother Manuel upbraided her for weeping. Just at that moment the castle chaplain came in; the whole family surrounded him and led him up to Juanito. Victor felt that he could endure the sight no longer, and with a sign to Clara he hurried from the room to make one last effort for them. He found the General in boisterous spirits; the officers were still sitting over their dinner and drinking together; the wine had loosened their tongues.

An hour later, a hundred of the principal citizens of Menda were summoned to the terrace by the General's orders to witness the execution of the family of Légañès. A detachment had been told off to keep order among the Spanish townsfolk, who were marshaled beneath the gallows whereon the Marquis's servants hung; the feet of those martyrs of their cause all but touched the citizens' heads. Thirty paces away stood the block; the blade of a scimitar glittered upon it, and the executioner stood by in case Juanito should refuse at the last.

The deepest silence prevailed, but before long it was broken by the sound of many footsteps, the measured tramp of a picket of soldiers, and the jingling of their weapons. Mingled with these came other noises—loud talk and laughter from the dinner-table where the officers were sitting; just as the music and the sound of the dancers' feet had drowned the preparation for last night's treacherous butchery.

All eyes turned to the castle, and beheld the family of nobles coming forth with incredible composure to their death. Every brow was serene and calm. One alone among them, haggard and overcome, leant on the arm of the priest, who poured forth all the consolations of religion for the one man who was condemned to live. Then the executioner, like the spectators, knew that Juanito had consented to perform his office for a day. The old Marquis and his wife, Clara and Mariquita, and their two brothers knelt a few paces from the fatal spot. Juanito reached it, guided by the priest. As he stood at the block the executioner plucked him by the sleeve, and took him aside, probably to give him certain instructions. The confessor so placed the victims that they could not witness the executions, but one and all stood upright and fearless, like Spaniards, as they were.

Clara sprang to her brother's side before the others.

"Juanito," she said to him, "be merciful to my lack of courage. Take me first!"

As she spoke, the footsteps of a man running at full speed echoed from the walls, and Victor appeared upon the scene. Clara was kneeling before the block; her white neck seemed to appeal to the blade to fall. The officer turned faint, but he found strength to rush to her side.

"The General grants you your life if you will consent to marry me," he murmured.

The Spanish girl gave the officer a glance full of proud disdain.

"Now, Juanito!" she said in her deep-toned voice.

Her head fell at Victor's feet. A shudder ran through the Marquesa de Légañès, a convulsive tremor that she could not control, but she gave no other sign of her anguish.

"Is this where I ought to be, dear Juanito? Is it all right?" little Manuel asked his brother.

"Oh, Mariquita, you are weeping!" Juanito said when his sister came.

"Yes," said the girl; "I am thinking of you, poor Juanito; how unhappy you will be when we are gone."

Then the Marquis's tall figure approached. He looked at the block where his children's blood had been shed, turned to the mute and motionless crowd, and said in a loud voice as he stretched out his hands to Juanito——

"Spaniards! I give my son a father's blessing. Now, *Marquis*, strike 'without fear'; thou art 'without reproach.'"

But when his mother came near, leaning on the confessor's arm—"She fed me from her breast!" Juanito cried in tones that drew a cry of horror from the crowd. The uproarious mirth of the officers over their wine died away before that terrible cry. The Marquesa knew that Juanito's courage was exhausted; at one bound she sprang to the balustrade, leapt forth, and was dashed to death on the rocks below. A cry of admiration broke from the spectators. Juanito swooned.

"General," said an officer, half drunk by this time, "Marchand has just been telling me something about this execution; I will wager that it was not by your orders——"

"Are you forgetting, gentlemen, that in a month's time five hundred families in France will be in mourning, and that we are still in Spain?" cried General G——. "Do you want us to leave our bones here?"

But not a man at the table, not even a subaltern, dared to empty his glass after that speech.

In spite of the respect in which all men hold the Marqués de Légañès, in spite of the title of *El Verdugo* (the executioner) conferred upon him as a patent of nobility by the King of Spain, the great noble is consumed by a gnawing grief. He lives a retired life, and seldom appears in public. The burden of his heroic crime weighs heavily upon him, and he seems to wait impatiently till the birth of a second son shall release him, and he may go to join the Shades that never cease to haunt him.

The Passing of Thomas

By THOMAS A. JANVIER

Thomas A. Janvier

I

ALTHOUGH by profession a stock-broker, Mr. Harver was a man of humane and even amiable disposition. Excepting in a business way, he was very loath to cause pain to any of his fellow-creatures; and a like kindliness was manifested to a marked degree in his treatment of the lower orders of animals. Even when it came to that portion of the insect world in dealing with which mankind is accustomed to employ tongs and poisonous solutions and destructive powders, Mr. Harver still exhibited his natural goodness of heart by using these exterminating agents with a benevolent firmness. The obnoxious insect entities were bereft of life, but with that maximum of celerity which assured a minimum of pain. Had Mr. Harver been a tyrant—using the word in its older and better sense—he would have been first among tyrants to employ electricity in the execution of criminals; and if science had revealed any more genial means of getting rid of criminals; that is to say, any means quicker and less painful than electricity—he would have adopted it instantly. At times he regretted keenly that his station in life had not been that of a tyrant. Occupying such a position—aside from the obvious advantage that it would have given him in regard to manipulating the stock market by means of Edicts—he could have made effective many improved theories of government which he had himself devised, or which he had read about in the course of his quite extensive study of the works of political economists. One of the reforms which he most earnestly longed to realise was the adoption of a system of rational philanthropy in accordance with which all malformed and constitutionally weakly persons—and of course all imbeciles, hopeless lunatics, and hereditary criminals—would be eliminated from the physically and morally sound portion of humanity by the least painful and most expeditious method that could be employed.

Being a person of this practically and resolutely benevolent sort, Mr. Harver's disposition was to offer to Thomas the choice, as it were, between bowls and bowstrings the very moment that Thomas, being then advanced to a great age, began to go blind. Owing to the entreaties of Mrs. Harver—who was not a student of political economy, and who was devotedly attached to Thomas—he consented to hold the decree of death in abeyance for a season, and even permitted Mrs. Harver to consult an oculist. But when the oculist had certified to the impossibility of a cure, and when Thomas's blindness had so increased that he could not walk across the room without bumping into chairs and tables, even Mrs. Harver admitted that the kindest thing to do to him would be to give him release from his affliction in death. And then Mr. Harver, in his practically kind-hearted way, said that there should be no bungling about it; that he himself would take Thomas down cellar and give him an overdose of ether on a sponge.

When Mrs. Harver held Thomas for the last time in her arms that fatal evening—the execution took place in the evening because Mr. Harver then had ample time to attend to it—her feelings entirely overcame her. Thomas's disposition was most affectionate. On this painful occasion he turned tenderly toward her his poor blind eyes; he pushed his soft little paws alternately against her arm so vigorously as to set to tinkling the silver bell that he wore about his neck; and with all the strength that remained in his aged body he purred forth his love. The situation was heartbreaking. Even Mr. Harver, as he gently unclasped Mrs. Harver's arms from about Thomas, and gently enfolded him in his own, had such a lump in his throat that his words of attempted consolation were spoken with difficulty; and his emotion so overcame him that he was near to missing his footing and tumbling down the whole length of the cellar stairs. As for Mrs. Harver when Thomas fairly was taken from her, she collapsed completely and fell upon a sofa in an agony of tears. From the days of his very earliest kittenhood she had loved Thomas tenderly and through all the fifteen years of their affectionate companionship her love for him steadily had increased. It was a most bitter blow that their parting had come at last, and in what seemed to be so cruel a way.

Half an hour or so later, Mr. Harver—bringing with him the odour of a dentist's office—returned to the library. Cobwebs stuck about him in various places, he was very pale, and beads of sweat stood thickly upon his brow. For a while he did not trust himself to speak: he simply sat down by Mrs. Harver's side and enfolded her in his arms. The silence was broken only by the sound of Mrs. Harver's sobs.

That both Mr. and Mrs. Harver should manifest such strong feelings was not, under the circumstances, at all surprising. They were without children, and for many years Thomas had filled the place of a child in their hearts and in their home. In his prime he had been one of the largest and finest maltese cats ever seen in the city of Philadelphia (which city is famous for its maltese cats of great size), and his moral and intellectual perfections had been in keeping with his physical beauty. Having been taken early in life and carefully educated, he had been trained to be a trick cat of rare parts; and his sweetness of temper was such that he always manifested a real pleasure in showing off his series of polite accomplishments. It had been his custom at meals, save on formal occasions, to sit beside Mrs. Harver on a high chair, eating with a decorous propriety from a small plate, and manifesting so keen a sense of the requirements of table etiquette that he never would begin his repast until his bib had been tied on. At night, the little silver bell about his neck tinkling to the time of his footsteps, it was his custom to precede Mr. and Mrs. Harver from the library—in which apartment their evenings usually were passed—to their bedchamber. With the utmost gravity he would walk up the stairs just in front of them; would bid them good-night by putting out his paws to be shaken; and then, of his own accord, would go to the basket in Mr. Harver's dressing-room in which he slept; and in the morning, at the very first sound of stirring in their apartment, he would come trotting in from the dressing-room, and would bid them good-day with a purr so shaking and gurgling as to bid fair to choke him. Being a cat of this most unusual sort, his loss, it will be perceived, was nothing short of a domestic calamity.

When the first violent outburst of their grief had passed and they had grown somewhat calmer, Mr. and Mrs. Harver talked for a while tenderly and lovingly about the late Thomas—his name never had been abbreviated either in addressing him or in speaking of him—and found a certain amount of sad comfort in recalling to each other's minds his many excellencies. From this they passed on to consideration of what disposition should be made of his remains. Mr. Harver, in his practical way, suggested the dustman; but Mrs. Harver would not hear of the dustman.

"How can you think of such a thing?" she asked with energy. "It is cruel. Thomas is much better entitled to a lot in Laurel Hill than a good many people who have one. He must be buried fittingly."

"Very well," said Mr. Harver; "let us bury him in the back-yard."

"No," Mrs. Harver answered; "it would be painful to have him buried there; and it also would be an insult to his memory. Thomas never was a back-yard cat. That will not do at all."

"In the cellar, then," Mr. Harver suggested, but hesitatingly.

"Impossible!" replied Mrs. Harver. "It would be horrible to have him right under us, that way—and I am sure that if we buried him in the cellar his dear little ghost would haunt the house. No; I tell you what we'll do: we'll take him out to Germantown and bury him in John's garden. Any cat would be glad to be buried in that beautiful garden; and I'm sure that John will let us put up a little stone with Thomas's name on it, and how old he was, and how through the whole of his life he was the very best cat that ever lived. Yes, that is the best thing that possibly can be done. Come home early from the office, and we'll do it to-morrow afternoon."

"You forget. To-morrow I am going to New York; and if the syndicate people make another mess of it, as they probably will, I shall be detained through the evening, and will have to come home on the midnight train. There's a special meeting of the Girard directors on Thursday morning at 9:30, or I would stay all night."

Mrs. Harver was silent for a moment. When she spoke it was in firm tones. "I will take dear Thomas out myself," she said. "To-morrow morning, before you go down-town, you can put him in the old silver-basket—now that we have the silver-safe in the pantry we no longer need it, and it still is a very respectable-looking basket to carry about—and I will put a napkin on top to make it look like something that I am carrying to a sick friend. It will be a rather conspicuously large basket to carry through the streets, I know; but if people think anything about it at all, they will only think that it is very kind-hearted of me to take so much trouble. Don't you think that that is a very good plan, dear?"

Mr. Harver was not disposed to yield an unqualified assent to this project; but he ended by admitting that this was about the only way by which Mrs. Harver's amiable wishes in regard to the entombment of Thomas in her brother John's garden could be realized. And then, the matter being thus settled, they went up-stairs together for the night.

It was a very dismal progress. No little grey figure trotted up the stairs ahead of them; there was no tinkling of a little silver bell; no little paws were extended to bid them good-night. Mrs. Harver broke down again completely. Mr. Harver had to give her ignatia before she could get to sleep.

II

The next day, after lunch, Mrs. Harver set out upon her sorrowful journey to Germantown. Being a person of exceptionally pleasing appearance, and being always very well dressed, she was accustomed when she fared abroad to having people turn around and look at her; but she was not accustomed to being stared at as vigorously as she was stared at on this particular day.

That she should be an object of lively interest to everyone who beheld her was not, on the whole, surprising. She was a little woman, and the old silver-basket which served for Thomas's catafalque was large. Moreover, there was a great deal of Thomas inside of it. One of their pet names for him (suggested by a naval relative) had been "The Eighteen-pounder"; which name had been justified by the actual facts. To carry eighteen pounds of dead cat in a large basket required more bodily strength, Mrs. Harver discovered, than she had readily at her disposal. Undeniably, the sight of this very small, very pretty, and very well-dressed woman struggling with her load was quite enough to make people stare—and they did! If the interested observers of her far from triumphal progress entertained the thought that she was carrying food to a sick friend, some difficulty must have been experienced in reconciling the quantity of food carried with the appetite of any known variety of invalid.

Fortunately, Mrs. Harver had but half a square to walk in order to reach a street-car. That distance was quite enough for her. When she got to the corner her arms were very tired and her face was very red. She was beginning to think that the contract which she had taken was a dangerously large one. For years she had been exceedingly proud of Thomas's unusual size. Her feeling now was that for mortuary purposes a much smaller cat would have been more desirable. And she regretted keenly that the little silver bell which for so many years had tinkled in unison to Thomas's footsteps had not been removed from his neck as a preliminary to his sepulture. Her regret was not lessened by the fact that it had been left in place at her particular request. As she walked along it did jingle dreadfully!

When she boarded the street-car the conductor took her basket from her and carried it to the front end. "Right up here, ma'am, out of the way," he said. He evidently was surprised by the jingling inside of the basket, and this queer little noise obviously aroused the interest of the passengers. Mrs. Harver felt that she was flushing desperately. It was very trying to be so persistently stared at. Moreover, the conductor's words, and his disposition of her property, made her feel as though she were a washer-woman taking home clean clothes. The appearance of the basket certainly tended to foster this belief. Mr. Harver had removed its central division and had stowed Thomas in it lengthwise, steadying him all around and covering him with wads of newspaper. Over this humpy surface—to give colour to the food-for-a-sick-friend theory—a large napkin had been spread and had been tucked in snugly at the sides and ends. With the washer-woman possibilities of the situation so pointedly suggested to her, it seemed quite impossible that anybody would entertain the sick-friend postulate for a moment. Her one sustaining consolation was the absolute correctness of her attire. Washer-women, she reflected, were not in the habit of wearing tailor-made gowns; nor did their gowns, hats, gloves, and fans, as a rule, belong to one harmonious scheme of colour. Her gown was tailor-made, and her colour effect was irreproachable. Up at the forward end of the car the air was somewhat heavy; and it was made heavier by a curious odour which Mrs. Harver did not at first recognize, but which aroused in her mind a chain of uneasy thoughts vaguely associated with pain. Presently she perceived that the people about her perceptibly were sniffing; and then she heard someone say: "What a horrid smell of ether!"

These words went through Mrs. Harver like a knife. She started violently, and she knew by the way her face burned that she must be quite crimson. During the remaining ten minutes that she was in the car she sat rigidly, her face averted from her fellow-passengers, gazing out of the front window. She did not see anything clearly. The backs of the horses seemed to be bobbing about in a curious mist.

As she left the car she knew that everybody was staring at her; she knew that everybody sniffed suspiciously as the conductor carried out her jingling basket, and she was conscious of a most unpleasant whispering behind her as she followed it. She had expected to take another car. Fortunately an empty hansom was passing. She hailed it, lifted the basket into it with some difficulty, and drove directly to the station.

A porter took her basket, carried it through the waiting-room, and put it aboard the train. She observed that the porter bent down over the basket and smelled at it in a manner that betokened curiosity and surprise. That his curiosity was stimulated, rather than allayed, when she gave him a half-dollar for his trifling service was obvious. He looked at her for a moment searchingly as he received this gift, but he did not speak. He was a loyal porter. Believing that he had been paid to keep silence, he kept it. At the door of the car he turned and shot another penetrating look at her. As he passed down the platform he paused before the window beside which she was seated and looked at her again. While this inquisition was in progress Mrs. Harver had the paradoxical sensation, as she subsequently expressed it, of being detected in the perpetration of an uncommitted crime.

As the train started she began to heave a sigh of relief—which ended abruptly in a smothered gasp of annoyance and alarm as she heard her name pronounced and, turning, beheld Mr. Hutchinson Port bowing to her. Of all the million or so of people dwelling in Philadelphia, Mr. Hutchinson Port—an elderly gentleman, of gluttonous tendencies, a bilious habit, and a most censorious disposition—was the very last whom Mrs. Harver would have desired to meet on that particular day. Rising sixty (though he did not admit it), Mr. Port was an itinerant encyclopædia of Philadelphia gossip and scandal of the preceding forty years. Moreover, his zest in adding to his stock of scandalous information was equalled only by his zeal in disseminating it; and, although normally dull and ponderous in his conversation, he manifested a considerable imaginative faculty in perverting minor lapses from social rectitude into downright social crimes, and even contrived to give to his misrepresentations of fact a humorous touch which sufficed to assure their general currency.

Being entirely familiar with these several facts, Mrs. Harver knew perfectly well that the discovery by Mr. Port of her odd venture in feline undertaking would result in the publication of the matter in such a way as to make a laughing-stock of her; and that she would be lucky if she got off without serious reflections being cast upon her moral character. Her promptly formed determination, therefore, was that he should not find out about it—even though, to compass this end, she should be compelled to shelter herself behind the fragments of the ninth commandment. She was a well-brought-up young woman, but she was of the opinion that when the suggestions of the Decalogue were at issue with the requirements of polite society the Decalogue necessarily must go under every time. Acting upon this opinion she said with an admirable cordiality:

"I am so very sorry that I cannot offer you a share of this seat, Mr. Port. But you wouldn't be comfortable here; my basket would crowd you. It is such a very big basket, you see."

"It certainly is a big basket," Mr. Port responded, looking down at it with some surprise. And then he added, with what was intended for sprightliness: "Really, Mrs. Harver, I am half disposed to believe that you contemplate turning burglar.

and are getting your hand in by running away with your own plate."

"How droll and how clever you are!" Mrs. Harver answered, with a warmly appreciative smile. "No, I am not running away with the plate; I am only taking a basket of—of jelly to Mrs. Selwyn, my sister-in-law." And then, feeling that she was in for it, she went on: "I am rather famous for my jelly, you know."

It is only just to Mrs. Harver to state that upon uttering this plumper she shivered a little. Absolutely, she never had made so much as a teaspoonful of any sort of jelly in the whole course of her life. Her notions in regard to this housewifely office were to the last degree confused and vague; mere scraps of theory based upon memories of talk about jelly-making which she had happened to overhear.

Unfortunately for Mrs. Harver, Mr. Port knew a great deal about jellies, and—his keenest colloquial pleasure being the discussion of any matter relating to eating—his manner at once became attentive and grave.

"You interest me deeply," he said, at the same time settling himself on the arm of the seat, and leaning over toward Mrs. Harver. "Jellies are one of my hobbies. May I ask of what your jelly is made? My! what a strong smell of ether!"

"Currants," Mrs. Harver answered, promptly. She was horrified by the reference to ether, and at any cost she was determined to keep the conversation on less dangerous ground. Moreover, she knew that a jelly was made of currants: they had had some with their roast mutton only the night before.

"My interest lies chiefly in meat jellies," Mr. Port replied, with a slight intonation of regret in his voice. "But there is much," he went on more cheerfully, "in fruit jellies which deserves the most careful thought. It is very curious, this smell of ether. What are your proportions?"

"Proportions?" asked Mrs. Harver, nervously. "I do not quite understand."

"I mean, how much sugar do you allow to a pint of juice? And do you dilute the juice? I hope not. Upon my soul, it smells like a hospital!"

"Oh, never!" said Mrs. Harver, with great decision—feeling quite safe in following Mr. Port's lead. She would have waited for a leader in regard to the sugar had she been calmer, but the reference to the hospital was upsetting, and she dashed ahead. "As to the sugar, I usually allow about—about two pounds to the pint. That makes it about right, don't you think?"

"Why, no," Mr. Port replied, bluntly, "I don't. It must make it ruinously sweet." And Mr. Port stared so hard at Mrs. Harver, and his expression was so peculiar, that she knew that she must have made a very bad break.

"Oh, but, you know," she went on, hurriedly, "the lemon juice corrects that. Without the lemon juice it would be ruinously sweet, just as you say. And more of the sweetness is counteracted, you know, by the lemon-peel and the whites of the eggs and the nutmeg." Mrs. Harver spoke now with a good deal of assurance, for she remembered that Mrs. Rittenhouse Smith had mentioned all of these things in connection with jelly only a few nights before.

Mr. Port regarded her with obvious wonder, and also with a slight air of reproachful doubt. "Really," he said, "this is quite the most extraordinary currant jelly that I ever heard of! And you actually mix those things together?"

"Certainly," Mrs. Harver answered. She remembered Mrs. Rittenhouse Smith's exact words, and went ahead swimmingly: "I mix them all together, and boil them gently for about five hours and a half, and then I strain them and set them away overnight in the refrigerator in a large earthen pan. You shall taste some of my jelly the very next time that you dine with us, Mr. Port."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Mr. Port, fervently, as he rose from his somewhat uncomfortable seat, straightened himself to his full height, and looked at Mrs. Harver in a manner that betokened not doubt, but grave displeasure. And then he added angrily, as his slow-moving mind arrived at what to him seemed to be the only reasonable explanation of Mrs. Harver's confusing utterances: "This is all nonsense; you are making game of me! Permit me to say that I do not find the same amusement in being rallied, and upon so serious a subject, as you evidently find in rallying me. I have the honour, madam, to wish you a very good day."

Having uttered these caustic words, Mr. Port raised his hat in a manner coldly formal, and with a severe dignity—like a very correctly dressed Lot abandoning a culinary Sodom—walked away from Mrs. Harver's contaminating presence into another car. So deeply outraged were all his finer feelings that he gladly would have walked away from her into another hemisphere.

For some moments Mrs. Harver was at a loss to understand why she had been thus wrathfully forsaken; and then, of a sudden, she remembered that Mrs. Rittenhouse Smith had been talking about calves'-foot jelly—and so perceived the fatal error into which she had fallen, and understood the meaning of Mr. Port's indignant words. She visibly shuddered: partly in dread of the exceedingly unpleasant things which in his justified wrath he certainly would say about her, and partly in horror of the thorough-going manner in which she had made a fool of herself. Chewing the cud of these bitter fancies was her cheerless occupation during the remainder of her short journey by rail. The silver lining to her cloud was the blessed knowledge that Mr. Port had not discovered that she was travelling in company with eighteen pounds of dead cat.

III

At the Germantown station Mrs. Harver transferred herself and her burden—the latter with difficulty—to a carriage and drove directly to the house of her brother John. The house, which stood a little back from the street, had an unusually shut-up look; and a long time elapsed between her ring and the partial opening of the door—with the chain still up—by a very young and very dull housemaid. Through the narrow opening from the housemaid's standpoint, the most conspicuous object in sight was the large basket—which Mrs. Harver, after her tussle with it up the path from the gate, very thankfully had deposited on the door-step. The girl gave one glance at the basket, said briefly, "Go ways wid ye—we don't want any," and began to close the door.

"Stop!" cried Mrs. Harver, at the same time pushing against the closing door. "Is Mrs. Selwyn at home?"

"Sure an' she's not at home," the girl answered; and added: "An' now yous be afther lavin' to oncet."

Mrs. Harver, naturally, was angry; but she was cool enough to perceive that the girl was only stupid. Therefore she pushed hard against the door, which was coming to again, and asked: "Where are your master and mistress?"

"An' phwat is't t'you where they be, I'd like t'know? But it's t' Cape May they've wint in a drivin' hurry, along o' th' blessed baby bein' took sick in th' night."

"Where are the other servants? There must be somebody else in the house besides you."

"Indade an' there ain't, thin; an' there don't nade t'be. Its meself can take care of it an' kape out th' thaves. But don't yous be afther thinkin' I'm alone here nights," she continued hurriedly, "for it's a houseful there is 'f us—th' master a-comin' home t'slape, an' Robert in th' stable, an' cook an' me. All th' boorglurs in th' wurruld couldn't get in—an' whin they did get in it's shot dead would ivry mother's son of 'em be! An' now go away wid ye paceable, wid no more wurruds."

"Listen!" said Mrs. Harver impressively. "I am Mr. Selwyn's sister—"

"Phwat are ye afther givin' me now?" the girl cut in sharply. "Th' master's sister, indade! An' yous wid a basket loike that!"

"I tell you," repeated Mrs. Harver, "I am Mr. Selwyn's sister, and that is the reason why I have brought this basket here. Now, what I want you to do is to take the basket and give it to Robert when he comes in, and to tell him that Mrs. Harver—he will know the name—that Mrs. Harver wants him to bury this poor little dead creature," her eyes filled with tears and her voice trembled, "down by the summer-house, beneath the large oleander. Tell him to make a pretty little grave, and to leave a place where a little tombstone—Good heavens, girl! What is the matter with you?"

The abrupt break in Mrs. Harver's address was not without ample cause. Of a sudden the housemaid's stupid face had grown pale, her eyes had enlarged prodigiously, and her whole expression betrayed great horror and alarm. With a half-gasp she cried: "Oh, you bloody murtherin' woman! Be off wid yees an' your dead baby before iver I call th' Perlace!" As she uttered these words she closed the door with a bang; and before Mrs. Harver could make even an attempt to open it she heard the clatter of a bolt on the inside.

The situation was a very absurd one, Mrs. Harver decided; but it was even more annoying than it was absurd. The servant absolutely refused to open the door again; and in response to knocks only fired peremptory orders through the keyhole to depart. At the end of five minutes Mrs. Harver perceived that the wisest course open to her was to follow the advice conveyed to her through this channel in such urgent terms. Fortunately, the driver of the carriage, moved by curiosity to see what would become of his queer fare, had waited at the gate. Owing to this circumstance she was in a position to make an orderly retreat. Suddenly the happy thought occurred to her that she would hire this man to relieve her of the painful duty with which she had charged herself, but to perform which seemed to be beyond her powers. No doubt, for a dollar, he would be very glad to bury Thomas in some pleasant place; and so would she be rid of her dismal burden, and Thomas would rest in peace.

She was so full of this project that she did not perceive—when she picked up the basket and set off with it down the path to the gate—that the door was opened, and that the housemaid came out and followed her. As she approached the carriage she looked at the driver attentively, in order to form some estimate of his suitableness for the service which she desired him to perform. He did not strike her as an especially promising-looking specimen of humanity; and she was surprised by perceiving that he was looking at her quite as keenly as she was looking at him. Her obvious repulse from the house which she obviously desired to enter had deepened his interest in her considerably.

"You seem to be a kind man," said Mrs. Harver, thinking it well to propitiate him by attributing to him virtues which she was inclined to believe he did not possess. "Will you do something for me? And, of course, I shall be very glad to pay you for your trouble. I want you to bury for me a poor little—"

"Yous be afther kapin' your oies on that murtherin' faymale!" the housemaid called out from the other side of the gate. "It's a dead baby, sure, she's got in her big basket. Turrun her over t' th' perlace!"

"Nonsense!" cried Mrs. Harver. "The woman's a fool. What I have in here is a poor little dead cat. I want you to bury it for me. Will you? I will pay you handsomely."

To Mrs. Harver's astonishment, and also to her indignation, the man gave her an exceedingly knowing look, and then actually winked at her.

"It's all right, ma'am," he said, in a confidential tone. "If you're willin' t' put up enough t' pay me for th' risk, I'll fix things for you—all on the quiet, and as comfortable as you please. How does a hunderd dollars strike you? That's little enough, when you remember that it's a jailin' job if I'm caught."

Mrs. Harver fairly gasped. "One hundred dollars for burying a cat! Man, you have taken leave of your senses!"

"Oh, come now, ma'am, it's all right t' call it a dead cat; that sounds better. But what's th' good o' tryin' t' come your dead cats on me? Ladies like you don't carry dead cats round th' country in baskets just for th' fun o' th' thing; an' they don't offer t' pay han'some for havin' 'em buried. It's too thin. You know what you've got in there; an' I know too—even if that fool of a girl wasn't a-yellin' it out loud enough for th' folks t' hear her in Chestnut Hill. But let all that slide, an' let's call it cats, if you want to. Th' nubs o' this thing is that you've got somethin' you want mighty bad t' get shut of, an' that I'm willin' t' shut you of it for a hunderd dollars. That's all there is to it—an' what I want t' know is, will you or won't you trade?"

"Drive me to the station at once," said Mrs. Harver, with great indignation. "If you dare to say another word I will call a policeman and have you arrested."

The man waited until Mrs. Harver was fairly in the carriage, the door shut, and he himself upon the box. Then he turned and answered: "Police is a game that two can play at. I'll drive you t' th' station fast enough. Ther's always an officer in front o' th' station. If you don't get reasonable an' agree t' trade by th' time we get there, I'll turn you over t' him—dead baby an' all!"

Being delivered of this threat, the driver whipped up his horses and the carriage rattled down the street.

Mrs. Harver's irritation was so extreme that even had opportunity been given her to reply to this insolent speech, she scarcely could have done so. Her anger fairly choked her. For a little while she was quite incapable even of coherent thought. As she drew near to the station, however, her brain cleared, and she determined upon an energetic line of action. She was quite sure that the driver was in earnest about turning her over to the police; and she perceived that the only way to counter was to turn herself over—that is to say, to call upon a policeman for protection. There was a strong probability, she knew, that the upshot of this move would be the parading of the whole affair in the newspapers; and before her mind floated a sickening vision of startling headlines: "The Lady and the Dead Cat," "Broker Harver's

Wife Tries to Bury Her Defunct Feline"—and stuff of that sort. But her strait was desperate, and desperation compelled her to go ahead. By a series of unavoidable mischances she had been, as it were, brought face to face with the devil. There was nothing for it but to fight him with fire.

The carriage stopped in front of the station. A few steps from the entrance was a policeman, who, after the manner of his kind, was swinging his club by its leather thong and looking ineffably bored. The driver got down from the box and came to the door. Leaning over it, with his hand on the knob, he asked, "Well, ma'am, is it a go?"

Mrs. Harver's mettle was up. For answer she called sharply, "Officer!" The policeman stopped swinging his club, and was at the door of the carriage in an instant.

"This man is misbehaving himself, officer," she said. "He is either drunk or crazy. Please make him stand aside while I get out."

The driver was not prepared for this sudden turning of his guns, but he rallied his forces promptly. "She's got a dead baby in her basket, she has; an' she's been offerin' me a hunderd dollars t' take 't off an' bury 't on th' quiet. So I've brought her down here so's t' give you a chance t' run her in. See?"

"What I've got in this basket is a dead cat," said Mrs. Harver, firmly. "Shall I open the basket and show it to you?"

"I guess mebbe you'd better, ma'am," replied the policeman, whose professional instinct led him to regard all large baskets with distrust.

Mrs. Harver was painfully aware of the fact that a crowd was gathering, the members of which were staring at her over the policeman's and the driver's shoulders with a very lively curiosity. If the earth just then could have opened and swallowed her up, she would have been delighted. As cataclysmic relief of this sort was not available, she went ahead. Bending down over the basket, with trembling hands she drew back the napkin and removed the layer of newspapers. There lay Thomas, rigid on his back, with his little grey paws crossed upon his grey breast. At sight of him she had much difficulty in keeping down a sob. Leaning forward, the policeman and the driver saw Thomas and were convinced.

"You're a blasted fool, you are," said the former politely to the latter.

"Well, it's her fault," replied the driver in an injured tone. "Who'd ever' a' thought as a lady like her 'u'd be packin' round dead cats!"

"Pray, pray drive away the crowd and let me get to the train," Mrs. Harver said in a low beseeching tone. Her one great longing was to get back to the protection of her own home.

"If this grown-up idjit has been givin' you trouble, ma'am, you'd better give him in charge an' let me run him in. It won't take ten minutes t' go t' th' station an' fix him. Say th' word, an' I'll get on th' box an' down we goes."

"No, no!" answered Mrs. Harver. "Only help me to get away."

"Very good, ma'am. It's as you fixes it. Now then, all of you move on!"

The crowd opened a little at this order, and through the opening—escorted by the policeman, who politely carried her basket for her—Mrs. Harver passed across the sidewalk and into the station. Luckily, a train was just starting. In two minutes she was speeding homeward in it, the basket containing Thomas at her feet, communing with her own agonizing thoughts. Her dominant agonizing thought was that if ever she brought another dead cat out to Germantown to bury it, somebody would have to tell her the reason why!

It was six o'clock when she reached her home. Warned by experience, she had given the street-cars a wide berth and had driven from the station in a carriage—to the driver of which she did not make proposals in regard to the sepulchral disposition of Thomas's remains.

Getting home, even with her mission still unfulfilled and Thomas still upon her hands, was a great relief to her. There, at least, she was safe. She had hoped strongly that Mr. Harver would have returned—for she longed to purr the story of her misadventures into his sympathetic ears—and she was a good deal disappointed by finding a telegram on the hall table telling that the syndicate business had detained him, and that he would not be able to leave before the midnight train. But she was so profoundly thankful that her trials were ended, and that she was safe within the shelter of her own walls, that she was far from being cast down. Indeed, her feeling of restful security made her positively cheerful.

It seemed heartless to put Thomas for the night in either the cellar or the back yard. Notwithstanding the trouble which he had got her into, she still loved him very tenderly and because of her love for him she decided that he should pass this last night in his accustomed quarters in Mr. Harver's dressing-room, close beside the bed-basket wherein he had been wont to take his innocent repose.

This matter being settled, Mrs. Harver very thankfully ate her dinner—after all that she had been through she stood in urgent need of solid food—and at the absurdly early hour of nine o'clock she decided to go to bed. The strain upon her nerves during that direful day had wearied her greatly; she really was tired out. Tired though she was, however, she remembered that when Mr. Harver came home at some unconscionable hour in the early morning, he certainly would be hungry; and for his refreshment she placed a decanter of sherry and a plate of biscuits on the sideboard, and even put his box of cigars on the library table in readiness for him, should he care to smoke after partaking of this repast. Having performed these kindly offices, she went to bed and to sleep with great celerity. Her last conscious thought was of the rigid little grey figure lying in the next room; and as she passed softly into slumber tears filled her sleepy eyes.

IV

Mrs. Harver woke suddenly, and with a curious feeling of waking in order to discharge immediately an important duty. So strong was this feeling that she found herself out of bed and in her slippers before her slowly arousing reason assured her that there was no important duty for her to discharge. It was very odd, she thought. A point of gas was burning beside her dressing-table. She raised the flame and looked at her watch. It was a little past three o'clock. Outside, she heard the sound of rain falling heavily. By this time she was wide enough awake to perceive that wisdom dictated her immediate return to bed. She concluded that she must have been dreaming.

Following the dictates of wisdom, she was about to turn down the gas when she became conscious of a strong smell of tobacco smoke. Then all was clear to her. Mr. Harver had returned—though she did not quite understand how he had managed to get back so soon—and the noise that he had made in closing the front door had awakened her, and at the same time had aroused in her mind the feeling that she had a duty to perform. What this duty was she now knew very well: it was to go down to the library and welcome him home, and while he finished his cigar she could tell him comfortably her tale of woe. She felt greatly refreshed by her five hours and more of sound sleep; she knew what surprise and pleasure would be caused by her unexpected appearance; and the prospect of so unconventional a tête-à-tête at three o'clock in the morning with her own husband had a spice of adventure about it that put her in a very sprightly mood.

Under the circumstances there was no need for elaborate dressing. She slipped on a blue cashmere wrapper which Mr. Harver especially approved of—Mrs. Harver was a pronounced blonde, with a great abundance of golden hair, and blue was very becoming to her—and a pair of Turkish blue slippers, embroidered with silver, which set off to excellent advantage her small white feet. Being thus prepared, she very softly opened her bedroom door, and very softly stole downstairs. Noise was to be avoided, because much of the success of her enterprise depended upon its being an entire surprise.

The Harver house was of the old-fashioned Philadelphia type—the most comfortable sort of city house that ever has been devised. In the deep back building, up a half-flight of stairs from the front hall, was the dining-room; and in the rear of this, practically a part of it when the intervening folding doors were open, was the library. Up a half-flight of stairs from the dining-room level was the first floor of the front building. The front room on this floor—reached by a long passage from the head of the stairs—was Mrs. Harver's bedroom; the back room, which also opened upon the passage, was Mr. Harver's dressing-room—where Thomas had been wont to sleep, and where he then was lying in the silver-basket wrapped in newspapers and in an eternal repose.

As Mrs. Harver tiptoed along the passage in her Turkish blue slippers the odor of tobacco smoke grew stronger, and when she came to the head of the half-flight of stairs she perceived through the open door of the dining-room that the gas in the library was burning brightly. She descended the stairs with the utmost caution, softly laughing to herself as she thought how surprised and how pleased Mr. Harver would be in a minute or two, and so came noiselessly to the dining-room door. From this point her view of the library was unobstructed. There he was, sure enough; at least there was one of his elbows and a part of one of his legs projecting at the side of the high-backed lounging-chair in which he was seated, and on the floor where he had dropped it lay his Gladstone bag. He seemed to be making himself exceedingly comfortable. Within easy reach, on the library table, was the decanter of sherry and a tumbler—it struck Mrs. Harver as odd that her husband, who was nice in such matters, should be drinking sherry out of a tumbler—and in close proximity to this liquid refreshment was the open box of cigars. The overhanging cloud showed that he was smoking vigorously.

Mrs. Harver's plan of campaign was to steal up behind Mr. Harver's chair and suddenly to put her two pretty little white hands in front of his eyes. This innocent pleasantry, she believed, would make him jump. She thought that it would be great fun to make him jump.

Her blue wrapper was of a soft unrustling material, and her slippered feet moved over the carpet noiselessly; favored by which circumstances she reached her desired point of vantage unobserved, and was in the very act of sliding her hands over the back of the chair when she made a very startling discovery: the head against which she was making these strategic advances was not covered with an abundance of dark brown hair—as Mr. Harver's head was—but with so meagre a sandy thatch that all the top of it was bald! Upon perceiving these highly disconcerting cranial conditions, she most naturally started back with an "Oh!" expressive of great perturbation and surprise.

The effect upon the person in the chair of this abrupt revelation of her presence was to make him jump quite as energetically as Mrs. Harver had expected Mr. Harver to jump; but the situation now was so radically changed that Mrs. Harver did not see anything at all funny in his sudden exaltation. As he gained his feet, and instantly faced about upon her, he uttered with great earnestness the Saxon name of the abode of departed sinful souls, and coupled with this exclamation the terse inquiry: "Who's that?"

For some seconds Mrs. Harver and the man contemplated each other over the back of the chair in silence, and in mutual surprise and alarm. The man, perceiving that Mrs. Harver was not at all a dangerous-looking person, was the first to recover composure sufficiently to speak.

"I beg your pardon, madam," he said, pleasantly. "I fear that my presence here has startled you. I am very sorry. Pray be seated—and permit me to offer you a glass of your own excellent sherry: it will do you good."

The tone in which these words were spoken was so entirely that of conventional society, and the words were so entirely those which any gentleman might have addressed under similar circumstances to any lady, that Mrs. Harver instantly felt relieved. The presence of this stranger in her house at this hour of the night certainly was peculiar, but his agreeable manner and assured air implied that the situation was susceptible of a commonplace and satisfactory explanation. The hypothesis that not unnaturally suggested itself to her mind was that he was somebody connected with the syndicate whom Mr. Harver had brought home with him, and who had been left temporarily alone in the library while Mr. Harver had gone to the pantry to fetch from the silver-safe—in which he frequently kept valuable papers—some document relating to the business in hand. Being thus assured, she accepted the offered sherry gratefully. The shock incident to what, at the moment, had seemed an alarming discovery had made her feel a little faint.

"Oh, thank you," she said as she seated herself, "You will find a glass on the sideboard in the other room."

The man rose with a polite alacrity; brought a wineglass from the sideboard; filled it, and handed it to Mrs. Harver with quite an air. As he crossed the room she had a good opportunity to look at him, and the result of her inspection was to make the existing situation still more confusing. He was very shabbily dressed and in garments which had the look of having been shabby alway; not the dress of a gentleman at all. Moreover, as he walked, his gait was so curiously unsteady that involuntarily she looked at the decanter. It was a quart decanter, and when she had left it on the sideboard it had been full. Now, it was nearly empty. Under these circumstances, Mrs. Harver again experienced sensations of alarm.

Having filled her glass and handed it to her, he emptied the remainder of the sherry into his tumbler, raised it to his lips with a bow, and said: "Madam, to your very good health!" Involuntarily, in natural reply to this courtesy, Mrs. Harver bowed also, and smiled.

"It's a shocking night, isn't it?" said the man, with the evident intention of making conversation; and added: “I managed to get quite soaked through.”

“Oh, I hope you haven’t caught cold,” Mrs. Harver replied, with a polite concern. The sherry had sent a genial glow through her body, and the man was treating her so obviously as his hostess, that—even if he had taken a little more wine than was good for him—she felt compelled to treat him as her guest.

“Thanks, you’re very good,” he answered. “I certainly should have caught a horrid cold but for your sherry. I was completely chilled when I came in; chilled all the way through, I assure you. You see, I had to come off in something of a hurry, and I missed my dinner. Getting drenched and chilled that way on an empty stomach is upsetting. It was Sydney Smith—wasn’t it?—who objected to taking exercise on his own empty stomach, and wanted to take it on somebody else’s. What a droll dog he was!”

He laughed pleasantly, and finished his sherry at a gulp. His manner of drinking wine certainly was not elegant, Mrs. Harver thought; and not at all in keeping with his agreeable manner and his easy reference to Sydney Smith. But Mr. Harver had told her that there were some very queer people in the syndicate—Western men with a good deal of bark on, as he had expressed it—and she concluded that this must be one of them.

“And then, of course, the strain was all the harder on me,” he went on, “because it came at the period of lowest vitality. The human system, you know, is at its ebb between the hours of one and three in the morning. That physiological fact handicaps men in my line of life badly. It is a heavy tax upon the nervous organization to be compelled to exert one’s self most strenuously at the very season of approximate collapse—the season which nature has designed for recuperative repose. But all professions have their annoyances. I don’t doubt that your husband suffers at times from nervous exhaustion. Stock-broking is a wearing business.”

The tone of the man’s voice was so entirely the tone of polite society, and his talk flowed on so naturally, that Mrs. Harver was set entirely at her ease. She leaned back comfortably in her chair, and at the same time placed her slippered feet upon the footstool. She was about to reply that Mr. Harver was at that very time a good deal run down by overwork in connection with the syndicate, and that she thought he ought to take a holiday. But she did not make these observations—for the quick glance that the man gave toward the footstool, and his instantly suppressed smile, brought suddenly to her mind the horrifying consciousness that she was without stockings!

“Oh!” she exclaimed, in great confusion, blushing charmingly, and hastily tucking the skirt of her wrapper about her feet. “I quite forgot—You see—you see, when I came down I thought you were Mr. Harver.”

“Pray do not apologize, madam. I quite understand. I am married myself. And I assure you, I cordially agree with Suckling about the charm of—I have forgotten precisely how the lines run, it is something about ‘a sweet disorder in the dress,’ and ‘little feet like mice stole out,’ and a ‘tempestuous petticoat.’ I rather think that I’m mixing my poets, part of that is Herrick, I’m sure—but never mind. I used to quote those lines to the first Mrs. Wilbraham—my wife, you know. She was very precise in matters of dress; really too precise, I used to tell her.”

Mrs. Harver was very grateful for the delicacy shown in diverting the conversation so neatly from the embarrassing region of her bare feet; and she was glad to find out, though she did not recognise it, this polite gentleman’s name.

“You are very kind indeed, Mr. Wilbraham—” she began.

“I beg your pardon,” he interrupted, “that is not my name.”

“But you spoke of your wife as—”

“Ah, I see. The mistake is natural. No, it is not my name but Mrs. Wilbraham always is the name of my wife.” He paused for a moment for the evident purpose of enjoying Mrs. Harver’s obvious inability to draw from this paradoxical statement any reasonable conclusion. “You can’t make it out, can you?” he continued, smiling affably. “Well, I will explain: you see, whenever I am married, I call my wife Mrs. Wilbraham, and by the uniform use of that name I give a pleasing sense of continuity to what in fact—owing to the unavoidable intervention of extraneous circumstances—is a varying, I may almost say a spasmodic, relation. Do I make myself clear?”

“No,” answered Mrs. Harver, who could make neither head nor tail of this extraordinary utterance; “I am afraid that you don’t—at least, not quite.”

“Why, it’s this way,” he went on, in a

carefully explanatory tone: "In our profession, you understand, frequent and sudden changes of residence are necessary. Sometimes I am able to take my wife with me; usually, however, I am forced to leave her behind—and, so far as I am concerned, that is the end of her."

"Oh!" interjected Mrs. Harver.

"Trying, isn't it?—and the more so because I am of an exceedingly domestic temperament, and never am entirely happy save in the peaceful retirement of my own home. It is because of this amiable weakness in my nature that almost my first act upon arriving in a new city is to marry a new wife—regularly marry her, you know, in shipshape fashion, with a parson and a ring. And then, by the simple device of calling her, as usual, Mrs. Wilbraham—that hallowed name around which, in the course of years, have clustered tender memories so numerous and so varied—I scarcely notice, amidst my new surroundings, that the strict continuity of my domestic happiness has suffered a trifling temporary break. Will you pardon me if I take a fresh cigar?"

Being accustomed to reply to requests of this nature with a polite affirmative, Mrs. Harver was moved by association of ideas to smile and to say, "Certainly." Her response was purely automatic. She was oppressed by the effort, characteristic of a very bad variety of nightmare, to believe impossibilities possible. In itself, the system of geographically diffuse polygamy presented for her consideration was incredible; but, on the other hand, it was presented with a sincerity so obvious as to compel belief. A helpless confusion of ideas was unavoidable while thus the irresistible was colliding with the immovable in the troubled mazes of her mind.

Evidently unconscious of the effect which his words were producing, the man lighted a fresh cigar, smoked for a minute or two in silence, and then, in a tone of meditative retrospection, resumed: "The lady to whom I referred just now as being so precise in regard to her dress, the one I used to quote Herrick to, was what I may term the first chapter in my conjugal serial. She was a Bostonian—as I am myself"—there was a touch of natural pride in his voice as he made this self-ennobling statement—"and we were married within a year of my graduation from Harvard. It was the conventional marriage of conventional society, and—as I had not at that time taken up my profession—was intended to be permanent. How odd it all seems now, as I look back at it! Ah, me! I was young then—only just turned of two-and-twenty. And now, heigh-ho, I am turned of forty-five! I refrain from the hackneyed quotation in the original, but the Latin poet certainly cut painfully close to the truth when he said that time flies, didn't he?"

At the words "conjugal serial," Mrs. Harver had pinched herself furtively to make sure that she was awake. The physiological response, in the shape of acute pain, to this simple psychological test having convinced her that she could not be dreaming, her mind had grown more and more numb in the hopeless effort to grasp and to co-ordinate the disorganised impossibilities which were offered to her by this singular person in the guise of the most commonplace facts. The one point at all clear to her was that in some unaccountable way—which she oviously was supposed to understand—his panoramic scheme of matrimony was the natural outgrowth of his profession; and, this thought being the only clear concept in her mind as he ceased speaking, she sought along the line thus indicated for further enlightenment.

"What is your profession?" she asked.

"Why, bless my soul!" the man exclaimed. "I thought you understood all along. I'm a burglar."

V

So strained were Mrs. Harver's receptive faculties, and so pleasantly and naturally was this statement made, that some seconds elapsed before she at all grasped its horrifying import. When she did realise the situation, however, her suddenly aroused mind worked with a vigour that was all the more marked because it went off at a decided tangent with the facts.

"A burglar!" she shrieked—and instantly sprang upon the chair in which she had been seated and tucked her skirts in tight around her feet. The lucid explanation which she gave subsequently of this curious action was that rats were her greatest horror, and that it was like rats just then.

The burglar also sprang to his feet. "S-s-s-h!" he exclaimed. "Don't make a row like that. You'll wake everybody up."

He was quite steady upon his legs, and spoke clearly and sharply. Apparently the abrupt break in the conversation had had the effect of counteracting what remained of the mellowing influence of the sherry. This inference was encouraged by the business-like tone and tenor of his next utterance.

"Come," he said, "I can't afford to fool around here any longer. I must get to work. Where do you keep your silver?"

Without replying to this question, Mrs. Harver untucked her skirts from about her feet—realising that the special peril in which she found herself was not adequately met by this particular measure of defence—and stepped down from the chair. She was a plucky little woman, and—now that she had got over the first shock of alarm—she was not by any means badly frightened. She was quite cool enough to know that the best thing for her to do was to get to the district telegraph call, in Mr. Harver's dressing-room, and to ring for a policeman; and she was silent not because she was frightened, but because her wits were at work trying to devise some plan by which this intelligent flank movement could be executed.

Not unnaturally, however, the burglar attributed her silence to fear; and it was in a reassuring tone that he continued: "I say, I'm not going to hurt you—not if you behave yourself, that is. But I'm here on business, and I've got to get it. I was so wet and cold and hungry when I came in that the sherry was too much for me. I'm all right now, and I mean to put this job through with a rush to make up for lost time. You take the silver upstairs nights, don't you? Whereabouts is it? And who's up there? Not your husband, I know, for he's in New York. Now, then, speak up lively. There's no time to lose."

Mrs. Harver would have been a good deal startled by this exhibition of accurate knowledge in regard to her husband's movements had not her mind suddenly become engrossed by consideration of what seemed to be a perfectly feasible plan—suggested to her by the question as to the whereabouts of the silver—for getting within reach of the district telegraph call. The emotional side of her nature rejected this plan, deeming it a close approach to sacrilege; but the intellectual side—urging that the claims of practical utility were superior to the claims of mere sentimentality—carried the day. Therefore she answered: "Excepting the servants in the attics, there is no one in the house beside myself. And the silver-basket," Mrs. Harver spoke with a nice precision that the burglar by no means appreciated, "is in Mr. Harver's dressing-room—the room just at the head of those stairs. If you are in a hurry, we had better go there at once."

"Now that's coolness, and it's also sense," he answered, admiringly; and added: "Pardon me if I reverse the custom of good society and take your arm, instead of offering you mine."

"Certainly," Mrs. Harver replied; but her heart sank a little as she felt the burglar's hand settle upon her arm in a vigorous clasp.

"Don't be alarmed," he said, as they went up the stairs together. "Giving you this police grip seems brutal, I know. But, you see, I've got to keep on the safe side. If I gave you the chance, you might take it into your head to bolt and try to raise the servants. Is this the room?"

"Yes, but the door is locked on the inside. I must trouble you to come around through the front room. This way, please." In spite of herself, there was a slight touch of eagerness in Mrs. Harver's tone.

The burglar stopped short, and his clutch upon her arm perceptibly tightened. In a low but deeply earnest voice he said: "See here, you're a long ways too polite and obliging. You're up to some sort of mischief. Now just take my advice and, whatever it is, don't try it on—for as sure as you do I'll stick a knife into you! I've run this business in Beacon Street style, so far, because you're a lady and I'm a gentleman. But I want you to understand that it is business, all the same, and that if you try to come any of your monkey shines on me you'll get hurt. If you've got a man up here, and mean to spring him on me, it'll be the worse for you—for I swear to Heaven I'll make sure of killing you before the fight begins! The comic opera part of this performance is played out. We've got along to the cold facts. If there's anybody in there, say so. If there isn't, go ahead."

Standing in the dark, with a burglar grasping her arm and threatening in tones of obvious sincerity to murder her, Mrs. Harver naturally was exceedingly alarmed. The situation was a trying and an unusual one. But, fortunately, being a little woman—and therefore quick-tempered—her anger overcame her fear. The brazen impudence of the proposal to kill her in her own house, and especially on the part of a proposer who had not a shadow of right to be inside of it, irritated her to such an extent that her strongest desire was to push ahead with her plan for bringing up her would-be murderer with a very round turn. For a moment she set her teeth hard, and then she said: "I have told you already that there is no one on this floor. If you prefer to break in a locked door to opening a door that is not locked, I am sure that I have no objections. I really think, though, that you will save time by coming around through my room."

Mrs. Harver's composure was more apparent than real. Every nerve in her body was tense, and her heart was beating violently. She held her breath while she waited for the burglar's reply—and it was with a sigh of relief that she felt his grasp upon her arm relax and heard him say, in tones of deep conviction: "You certainly are the very coolest woman I ever came across. You'd chill a refrigerator! Come along—;" and then they went on into the front room.

The gas was burning at a full head, as Mrs. Harver had left it. On her dressing-table was her watch and a tray in which were a pair of bracelets and some rings. The burglar's trained eye caught the glitter of these objects, and he stepped toward them.

Mrs. Harver restrained him gently. "Will it not be a more convenient arrangement to get the silver-basket first?" she asked. "My little things can go right in on top, you know.'

The burglar looked at her admiringly. "There's sense in that," he said, and added: "You really are a wonderful woman. I used to think that the third Mrs. Wilbraham—no, it was the fourth, the Chicago one—was cool. But she was nothing to you. I should say that in summer you'd be useful as an ice-machine!"

Ignoring this compliment, though she highly appreciated it, Mrs. Harver suffered herself to be led into the dressing-room—where one of the gas-jets over the bureau, in readiness for Mr. Harver's coming, was lighted and turned low. The bureau stood against the rear wall between the windows. On a chair in front of one of these windows, directly beneath the lighted gas-jet, was the silver-basket containing Thomas's remains. Against the frame of the other window, concealed by the curtain, was the district telegraph call. Mrs. Harver's breath was coming in little gasps.

As the burglar turned the gas up full he gave a quick glance around him to make sure that he had not been led into some sort of a trap. But he saw no signs of a trap—and there was the promised silver-basket. It was a large, satisfactory silver-basket, with the look of weighing many pounds. In his eagerness to test its weight he dropped Mrs. Harver's arm and poised the basket in his hand—and the slight jingling sound that came from within as he raised it fell very musically upon his ear. Mrs. Harver's fingers were upon the key of the call box at that moment, and the jingling almost unnerved her for the task that she had in hand—so intimately was it associated with tender memories of a trotting little grey figure which never more would trot again! The feeling that in using Thomas as a decoy cat she was committing sacrilege again occurred to her. What indignity might not be put upon his remains should the burglar open the basket? This thought fortunately came to steady her. With a firm hand she moved the key back to the police call.

On the burglar's face was a sunny smile as he exclaimed: "Twenty pounds, if there's an ounce! This is what I call luck!"

B-z-z-z-z-z-z! A patter of feet on the carpet! The slamming of a door, followed instantly by the click of a lock.

These phenomena, although successive, occurred with such rapidity that to the burglar they seemed to be simultaneous. At their conclusion he found himself alone with the silver-basket, and momentarily stunned by the shock incident to a painful but ideally complete surprise.

As his shock subsided, acting less on reason than on impulse, he rushed to the closed door and lunged against it with his shoulder violently. The noise produced by this concussion was dangerously loud. He hesitated before repeating the blow. This unlooked-for demonstration alarmed Mrs. Harver—whose mental arrangement of the matter had been that he would try to run away, and would be caught by the policeman in the back alley; not that he would remain and murder her before the policeman arrived. She therefore felt called upon to counsel him, and, while he hesitated about continuing his battery against the door, addressed him in distinct tones from the other side:

"I don't think that you quite understand. Please listen for a moment," she said politely. "I have rung for a policeman. When we call a messenger, one usually comes within four minutes. The policeman probably will get here in about the same time. If you want to leave before his arrival you have very little time—three minutes, at the most. Of course I don't want to seem to hurry you—but, indeed, I think you had better go."

Before Mrs. Harver had quite finished

this deliverance of intelligent advice the burglar had begun to act upon it. She heard him unlock and open the door leading into the passage; she heard him dash downstairs, and she heard the slamming behind him of the spring-door leading into the kitchen. An instant later there was the sound of hurrying footsteps on the front pavement, and then a sharp ring at the bell.

Mrs. Harver opened a window and saw a policeman standing on the steps. "Quick!" she cried. "There's a burglar getting away by the alley!"

The man was off around the corner like a flash.

Mrs. Harver still was leaning out of the window, looking in the direction in which the policeman had gone, when a cab drove up to the front door and Mr. Harver got out of it. He was a good deal surprised by finding his wife popping out at the front window that way at four o'clock in the morning. In a moment the situation was explained to him—and then he was off around the corner like another flash to help the policeman.

Naturally, Mrs. Harver was desirous of seeing as much as possible of what was going on; and in the hope that some part of the scene of operations would be visible from one of the windows in Mr. Harver's dressing-room, she unlocked the door again and passed into that apartment. But she never got to either of the windows. Midway in her passage across the room she stopped suddenly and stood with agonized, wide-open eyes staring into ghastly nothingness—the silver-basket, with Thomas inside of it, was gone! With a deep groan she collapsed into a heap upon the floor and burst into tears.

There she sat, weeping bitterly, when, ten minutes later, Mr. Harver came back with the information that the burglar had got safe away.

"Then Thomas is lost to us forever!" she said in hollow tones of woe.

Mr. Harver pressed for an explanation, and in a voice broken with sobs she told the story of her too successful strategy that had led to this agonizing result. "Oh! Oh!" she cried, in the bitterness of her grief, while Mr. Harver clasped her to his breast and tried to soothe her. "Don't say that it don't matter, and that I'll get over it in time. It does matter, and I'll never get over it. He was the best and the sweetest cat that ever lived—and I've gone and made a ca-cat's-paw of the wh-whole of him—and now we never can bury him at all!"

It is a fact to be noted that the burglar was no better pleased with the result of Mrs. Harver's strategic use of Thomas than she was herself. Upon opening the basket, in the seclusion of his own home, his indignation was so great that for some seconds he was unable to speak at all. When the use of his vocal apparatus was restored to him, his words were vigorous but few.

"A—dead—cat!" he said slowly, and with a most bitter contempt. And then, in exclamatory tones, he uttered the Saxon name of the abode of departed sinful souls.

Greek Folk Song

Translated by ANDREW LANG

ALL in the mirk midnight when I was beside you
    Who has heard, who has seen, what was said, what was done?
'Twas the night and the light of the stars that espied you
The fall of the moon, and the dawning begun.
'Tis a swift star has fallen; a star that discovers
To the sea, what the green sea then tells to the oars—
And the oars to the sailors—and they of us lovers
Go singing this song at their mistresses' doors.

The Woman Who "Left A Sting in the Soul"

[Cleopatra, daughter of Ptolemy XI of Egypt, has remained for twenty centuries the supreme type of feminine fascination. Born in 69 B. C., and dying by her own act before she was forty, she was queen of Egypt twenty-two years, and dominated the world by dominating its Roman rulers. Many writers have striven to depict her and the tragic tale of Antony's love.]

She was a woman of surpassing beauty, especially conspicuous at that time because in the prime of youth, with a most delicious voice and a knowledge of how to make herself agreeable to every one . . . brilliant to look upon and to listen to. Dio Cassius.

All for Love,
or, The World Well Lost

Antony—Go! Whither? Go from all that's excellent!
Faith, honour, virtue, all good things forbid,
That I should go from her, who sets my love
Above the price of kingdoms. Give, you gods,
Give to your boy, your Caesar,
This rattle of a globe to play withal,
This gewgaw world, and put him cheaply off:
I'll not be pleased with less than Cleopatra. John Dryden.

When Cleopatra was Twenty

Caesar replied that he did not want Egyptians to be his counsellors, and soon after privately sent for Cleopatra from her retirement.

She took a small boat, and only one of her confidants, Apollodorus, the Sicilian, along with her, and in the dusk of the evening landed near the palace. She was at a loss how to get in undiscovered, till she thought of putting herself into the coverlet of a bed and lying at length, whilst Apollodorus tied up the bedding and carried it on his back through the gates to Caesar's apartment.

Caesar was first captivated by this proof of Cleopatra's bold wit, and was afterwards so overcome by the charm of her society that he made a reconciliation between her and her brother, on condition that she should rule as his colleague in the kingdom. Plutarch.

Seven Years Later

Such being his (Antony's) temper, the last and crowning mischief that could befall him came in the love of Cleopatra, to awaken and kindle to fury passions that as yet lay still and dormant in his nature . . .

He fell into the snare thus. When making preparation for the Parthian war, he sent to command her to make her personal appearance in Cilicia, to answer an accusation, that she had given great assistance in the late wars to Cassius. Dellius, who was sent on this message, had no sooner seen her face, and remarked her adroitness and subtlety in speech, than he felt convinced that Antony would not so much as think of molesting a woman like this; on the contrary she would be the first in favour with him. So he set himself at once to pay his court to the Egyptian, and gave her his advice, "to go," in the Homeric style, to Cilicia, "in her best attire," and bade her fear nothing from Antony, the best and kindest of soldiers.

She had some faith in the words of Dellius, but more in her own attractions; which having formerly recommended her to Caesar and the young Cænus Pompey, she did not doubt might prove yet more successful with Antony. Their acquaintance was with her when a girl, young and ignorant of the world, but she was to meet Antony in the time of life when women's beauty is most splendid, and their intellects are in full maturity. She made great preparations for her journey, of money, gifts, and ornaments of value, such as so wealthy a kingdom might afford, but she brought with her her surest hopes in her own magic arts and charms.

She received several letters, both from Antony and from his friends, to summon her, but she took no account of these orders; and at last, as if in mockery of them, she came sailing up the river Cydnus, in a barge with gilded stern and outspread sails of purple, while oars of silver beat time to the music of flutes and fifes and harps.

She herself lay all along under a canopy of cloth of gold, dressed as Venus in a picture, and beautiful young boys, like painted Cupids, stood on each side to fan her. Her maids were dressed like sea nymphs and Graces, some steering at the rudder, some working at the ropes. The perfumes diffused themselves from the vessel to the shore, which was covered with multitudes, part following the galley up the river on either bank, part running out of the city to see the sight.

The market-place was quite emptied, and Antony at last was left sitting alone upon the tribunal; while the word went through all the multitude, that Venus was come to feast with Bacchus, for the common good of Asia.

On her arrival, Antony sent to invite her to supper. She thought it fitter he should come to her; so, willing to show his good-humour and courtesy, he complied, and went. He found the preparations to receive him magnificent beyond expression, but nothing so admirable as the great number of lights; for on a sudden there was let down altogether so great a number of branches with lights in them so ingeniously disposed, some in squares and some in circles, that the whole thing was a spectacle that has seldom been equalled for beauty.

On the following day Antony feasted her in his turn, and was ambitious to surpass her splendour and elegance, but in both regards he was left behind, and vanquished in these very points, and was first to rail at the meagreness and rusticity of his own arrangements. Cleopatra observed in the jests of Antony much of the soldier and the common man, and adopted this manner also towards him, without restraint now, and boldly.

For her beauty, as we are told, was in itself not altogether incomparable, nor such as to strike those who saw her; but converse with her had an irresistible charm, and her presence, combined with the persuasiveness of her discourse and the character which was somehow diffused about her behaviour towards others, had something stimulating about it. There was sweetness also in the tones of her voice; and her tongue, like an instrument of many strings, she could readily turn to whatever language she pleased, so that in her interviews with Barbarians she very seldom had need of an interpreter, but made her replies to most of them herself and unassisted, whether they were Ethiopians, Troglodytes, Hebrews, Arabians, Syrians, Medes or Parthians. Nay, it is said that she knew the speech of many other peoples also, although the kings of Egypt before her had not even made an effort to learn the native language, and some actually gave up their Macedonian dialect.

PLUTARCH.

❧

ANTONY—She is cunning past man's thought.

ENOBARBUS—Alack, sir, no; her passions are made of nothing but the finest part of pure love: we cannot call her winds and waters sighs and tears; they are greater storms and tempests than almanacs can report: this cannot be cunning in her; if it be, she makes a shower of rain as well as Jove.

ANTONY—Would I had never seen her!

ENOBARBUS—Oh, sir, you had then left unseen a wonderful piece of work; which not to have been blest withal would have discredited your travel. SHAKESPEARE.

⁂

MECAENAS—Now Antony must leave her utterly.
ENOBARBUS—Never; he will not:
Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety; other women cloy
The appetites they feed; but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies. SHAKESPEARE.

⁂

KLEOPATRA (*reflectively*)—Caesar! He was truly a wonder! and yet, Charmion, he was a very difficult man, Caesar. His habits made him so awkward to deal with. Do you remember how he would only drink toast and water? And how he was for ever writing on his tablets?—a vile habit! And how he always made bad puns when great danger threatened to overwhelm him? What can you do with a man like that? He never would talk seriously with me, and even a girl like you, Charmion, knows well enough that the only way in which a woman can make a man tractable is by persuading him to talk seriously with her. . . .

ARSINOË—Brutal barbarian!

KLEOPATRA—No, whatever else he was, he was not brutal; that, in fact, was a great part of the difficulty. I was so young then! Had I only been a few years older, Arsinoë, Caesar would have made me queen of all the world. JOHN STONE.

⁂

Nineteen hundred years ago from the date of this writing, a magnificently gilded and painted cangia was descending the Nile as rapidly as fifty long, flat oars, which seemed to crawl over the furrowed water like the legs of a gigantic scarabæus, could impel it. . .

The interior was painted white with green arabesques, bands of vermilion, and gilt flowers fantastically shaped; an exceedingly fine rush matting covered the floor; at the further end stood a little bed, supported upon griffin's feet, having a back resembling that of a modern lounge or sofa; a stool with four steps to enable one to climb into bed; and (rather an odd luxury according to our ideas of comfort) a sort of hemicycle of cedar wood, supported upon a single leg, and designed to fit the nape of the neck so as to support the head of the person reclining.

Upon this strange pillow reposed a most charming head, one look of which once caused the loss of half a world; an adorable, a divine head; the head of the most perfect woman that ever lived; the most womanly and most queenly of all women; an admirable type of beauty which the imagination of poets could never invest with any new grace, and which dreamers will find forever in the depths of their dreams—it is not necessary to name Cleopatra.

Beside her stood her favourite slave Charmion, waving a large fan of ibis feathers; and a young girl was moistening with scented water the little reed blinds attached to the windows of the *naos*, so that the air might only enter impregnated with fresh odours. . .

Cleopatra merely touched the beverage with her lips, laid the cup down beside her, and turning upon Charmion her beautiful liquid black eyes, lustrous with living light, exclaimed:

"O Charmion, I am weary unto death!" THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.

⁂

(*Meiamoun has been discovered concealed behind a bush, while Cleopatra was taking her bath. He pleads love as his only motive and Cleopatra takes the sudden whim to grant him his life.*)

"What would you that I should do with life? I love you!"

"Well, then, you shall be satisfied; you shall die," answered Cleopatra. "You have indulged yourself in wild and extravagant dreams; in fancy your desires have crossed an impassable threshold. You imagined yourself to be Caesar or Mark Antony. You loved the queen. In some moments of delirium you have been able to believe that, under some condition of things which takes place but once in a thousand years, Cleopatra might some day love you. . . . It pleases me, for once, to secure the accomplishment of a mad hope. I am willing to inundate you with glories and splendours and lightnings. I intend that your good fortune shall be dazzling in its brilliancy. . . . I take you out of nothingness, I make you the equal of a god, and I plunge you back again into nothingness; that is all. But do not presume to call me cruel or to invoke my pity; do not weaken when the hour comes. I am good to you. I lend myself to your folly. I have the right to order you to be killed at once; but since you tell me that you love me, I will have you killed to-morrow instead. Your life belongs to me for one night. I am generous. I will buy it from you; I could take it from you. But what are you doing on your knees at my feet? Rise, and give me your arm, that we may return to the palace." Théophile Gautier.

* * *

Even when she brooded, the fire of her quick heart shone through her. But when she woke, and the lightning leapt suddenly from her eyes, and the passion-laden music of her speech chimed upon her lips, ah! then who can tell how Cleopatra seemed? For in her met all the splendours that have been given to woman for her glory, and all the genius which man has drawn from heaven. And with them dwelt every evil of that greater sort which, fearing nothing and making a mock of laws, hath taken empires for its place of play, and, smiling, watered the growth of its desires with the rich blood of men. In her breast they gathered together, fashioning that Cleopatra whom no man can draw, and yet whom no man, having seen, ever can forget. They fashioned her grand as the Spirit of Storm, lovely as Lightning, cruel as Pestilence, yet with a heart; and what she did is known. Woe to the world when such another comes to curse it! H. Rider Haggard.

* * *

Caesar—What has happened to Pothinus? I set him free, here, not half an hour ago. Did they not pass him out? . . .

Cleopatra (*violently—rising*)—He was slain by order of the Queen of Egypt. I am not Julius Caesar the dreamer, who allows every slave to insult him. Rufio has said I did well: now the others shall judge me too. (*She turns to the others*) This Pothinus sought to make me conspire with him to betray Caesar to Achillas and Ptolemy. I refused; and he cursed me and came privily to Caesar to accuse me of his own treachery. I caught him in the act; and he insulted me—me, the Queen! to my face. Caesar would not avenge me: he spoke him fair and set him free. Was I right to avenge myself?

George Bernard Shaw.

* * *

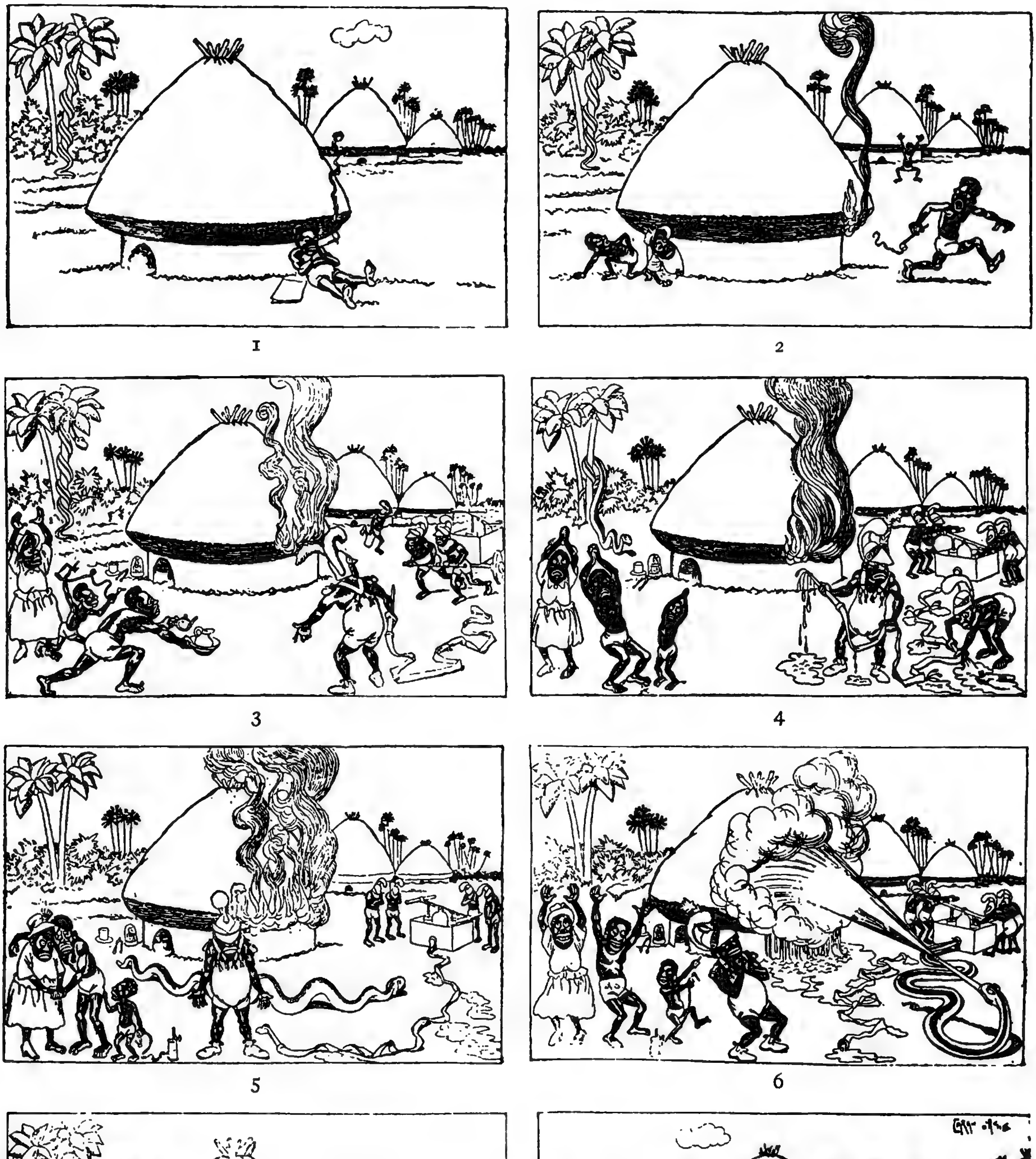
One day, when Antony was extolling the luxuriousness and profusion of a certain entertainment, he exclaimed that no other could surpass it. Cleopatra, who always affected to put no limit to the possible, replied that the present feast was a wretched affair and she laid a wager that the next day she would give one on which she would expend ten millions of sesterces (approximately half a million dollars). Antony took the bet. The next day the feast, magnificent as it was, had nothing to distinguish it from the preceding one, and Antony did not fail to rally Cleopatra. "Per Bacchus," cried he, "this would never cost ten millions of sesterces!" "I know that," replied the queen, "but you see only the accessories. I myself will drink alone the ten millions," and at once detaching from her ear a single pearl—the largest and most perfect ever seen—she threw it into a golden cup, in which it was dissolved in the vinegar there prepared, and swallowed at one draught the acid beverage. She was about to sacrifice the second pearl when L. Plancus, the umpire of the wager, arrested her hand by declaring that she had won. Henri Houssaye.

* * *

No, Cleopatra was not a great queen. But for her connection with Antony, she would be forgotten with Arsinoë or Berenice. If her renown is immortal, it is because she is the heroine of the most dramatic love story of antiquity. Henri Houssaye.

The Water-Boa

By CARAN D'ACHE (Emmanuel Poiré)



The Rawhide

By STEWART EDWARD WHITE

Stewart Edward White

CHAPTER ONE

THE PASSING OF THE COLT'S FORTY-FIVE

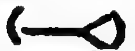
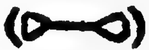
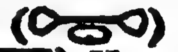
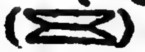
THE man of whom I am now to tell you came to Arizona in the early days of Chief Cohise. He settled in the Soda Springs Valley, and there persisted in spite of the devastating forays of that Apache. After a time he owned all the wells and springs in the valley, and so, naturally, controlled the grazing on that extensive free range. Once a day the cattle, in twos and threes, in bands, in strings, could be seen winding leisurely down the deep-trodden and converging trails to the water troughs at the home ranch, there leisurely to drink, and then leisurely to drift away into the saffron and violet and amethyst distances of the desert. At ten other outlying ranches this daily scene was repeated. All these cattle belonged to the man, great by reason of his priority in the country, the balance of his even character, and the grim determination of his spirit.

When he had first entered Soda Springs Valley his companions had called him Buck Johnson. Since then his form had squared, his eyes had steadied to the serenity of a great authority, his mouth, shadowed by the moustache and the beard, had closed straight in the line of power and taciturnity. There was about him more than a trace of the Spanish. So now he was known as Señor Johnson, although in reality he was straight American enough.

Señor Johnson lived at the home ranch with a Chinese cook, and Parker, his foreman. The home ranch was of adobe, built with loopholes like a fort. In the obsolescence of this necessity, other buildings had sprung up unfortified. An adobe bunkhouse for the cow-punchers, an adobe blacksmith shop, a long, low stable, a shed, a windmill and pond-like reservoir, a whole system of corrals of different sizes, a walled-in vegetable garden—these gathered to themselves cottonwoods from the moisture of their being, and so added each a little to the green spot in the desert. In the smallest corral, between the stable and the shed, stood a buckboard and a heavy wagon, the only wheeled vehicles about the place. Under the shed were rows of saddles, riatas, spurs mounted with silver, bits ornamented with the same metal, curved short irons for the range branding, long, heavy "stamps" for the corral branding. Behind the stable lay the "pasture," a thousand acres of desert fenced in with wire. There the hardy cow-ponies sought out the sparse, but nutritious, bunch grass, sixty of them, beautiful as antelope, for they were the pick of Señor Johnson's herds.

And all about lay the desert, shimmering, changing, many-tinted, wonderful, hemmed in by the mountains that seemed tenuous and thin, like beautiful mists, and by the sky that seemed hard and polished like a turquoise.

Each morning at six o'clock the ten cow-punchers of the home ranch drove the horses to the corral, neatly roped the dozen to be "kept up" for that day, and rewarded the rest with a feed of grain. Then they rode away at a little fox trot, two by two. All day long they travelled thus, conducting the business of the range, and at night, having completed the circle, they jingled again into the corral. At the ten other ranches this programme had been duplicated. The half-hundred men of Señor Johnson's outfit had covered the area of a European principality. And all of it, every acre, every spear of grass, every cactus prickle, every creature on it, practically belonged to Señor Johnson, because Señor Johnson owned the water, and without water one cannot exist on the desert.

This result had not been gained without struggle. The fact could be read in the settled lines of Señor Johnson's face, and the great calm of his grey eye. Indian days drove him often to the shelter of the loopholed adobe ranch house, there to await the soldiers from the Fort, in plain sight thirty miles away on the slope that led to the foot of the Chiricahuas. He lost cattle and some men, but the profits were great, and in time Cochise, Geronimo, and the lesser lights had flickered out in the winds of destiny. The sheep terror merely threatened, for it was soon discovered that with the feed of Soda Springs Valley grew a burr that annoyed the flocks beyond reason, so the bleating scourge swept by forty miles away. Cattle rustling so near the Mexican line was an easy matter. For a time Señor Johnson commanded an armed band. He was lord of the high, the low, and the middle justice. He violated international ethics, and for the laws of nations he substituted his own. One by one he annihilated the thieves of cattle, sometimes in open fight, but oftener by surprise and deliberate massacre. The country was delivered. And then, with indefatigable energy, Señor Johnson became a skilled detective. Alone, or with Parker, his foreman, he rode the country through, gathering evidence. When the evidence was unassailable he brought offenders to book. The rebranding through a wet blanket he knew and could prove; the ear-marking of an unbranded calf until it could be weaned he understood; the paring of hoofs to prevent travelling he could tell as far as he could see; the crafty alteration of similar brands—as when a Mexican changed Johnson's Lazy Y  to a Dumb-bell Bar  —he saw through at a glance. In short, the hundred and one petty tricks of the sneak-thief he ferreted out, in danger of his life. Then he sent to Phœnix for a Ranger—and that was the last of the Dumb-bell Bar brand, or the  Three Link Bar brand, or the  Hour Glass Brand, or a half dozen others. The Soda Springs Valley acquired a reputation for good order.

Señor Johnson at this stage of his career found himself dropping into a routine. In March began the spring branding, then the corralling and breaking of the wild horses, the summer range-riding, the great fall round-up, the shipping of cattle, and the riding of the winter range. This happened over and over again.

You and I would not have suffered from ennui. The roping and throwing and branding, the wild swing and dash of handling stock, the mad races to head the mustangs, the fierce combats to subdue these raging wild beasts to the saddle, the spectacle of the round-up with its brutish multitudes and its graceful riders, the dust and monotony and excitement and glory of the Trail, and especially the hundreds of incidental and gratuitous adventures of bears and antelope, of thirst and heat, of the joy of taking care of one's self—all these would have filled our days with the glittering, changing throng of the unusual.

But to Señor Johnson it had become an old story. After the days of construction the days of accomplishment seemed to him lean. His men did the work and reaped the excitement. Señor Johnson never thought now of riding the wild horses, of swinging the rope coiled at his saddle horn, or of rounding ahead of the flying herds. His inspections were business inspections. The country was tame. The leather chaps with the silver *conchas* hung behind the door. The Colt's forty-five depended at the head of the bed. Señor Johnson rode in mufti. Of his cowboy days persisted still the high-heeled boots and spurs, the broad Stetson hat, and the fringed buckskin gauntlets.

The Colt's forty-five had been the last to go. Finally one evening Señor Johnson received an express package. He opened it before the undemonstrative Parker. It proved to contain a pocket "gun"—a nickel-plated, thirty-eight calibre Smith & Wesson "five-shooter." Señor Johnson examined it a little doubtfully. In comparison with the six-shooter it looked like a toy.

"How do you like her?" he inquired, handing the weapon to Parker.

Parker turned it over and over, as a child a rattle. Then he returned it to its owner.

"Señor," said he, "if ever you shoot me with that little old gun, *and* I find it out the same day, I'll just raise hell with you!"

"I don't reckon she'd *injure* a man much," agreed the Señor, "but perhaps she'd call his attention."

However, the "little old gun" took its place, not in Señor Johnson's hip pocket, but inside the front waistband of his trousers, and the old shiny Colt's forty-five, with its worn leather "Texas style" holster, became a bedroom ornament.

Thus, from a frontiersman dropped Señor Johnson to the status of a property owner. In a general way he had to attend to his interests before the cattlemen's association;

he had to arrange for the buying and shipping, and the rest was leisure. He could now have gone away somewhere as far as time went. So can a fish live in trees—as far as time goes. And in the daily riding, riding, riding over the range he found the opportunity for abstract thought which the frontier life had crowded aside.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SHAPES OF ILLUSION

EVERY day, as always, Señor Johnson rode abroad over the land. His surroundings had before been accepted casually as a more or less pertinent setting of action and condition. Now he sensed some of the fascination of the Arizona desert.

He noticed many things before unnoticed. As he jingled loosely along on his cow horse, he observed how the animal waded fetlock deep in the gorgeous orange California poppies, and then he looked up and about and saw that the rich colour carpeted the landscape as far as his eye could reach, so that it seemed as though he could ride on and on through them to the distant Chiricahuas. Only, close under the hills, lay, unobtrusive, a narrow streak of grey. And in a few hours he had reached the streak of grey, and ridden out into it to find himself the centre of a limitless alkali plain, so that again it seemed the valley could contain nothing else of importance. Looking back, Señor Johnson could discern a tenuous ribbon of orange—the poppies. And perhaps ahead a little shadow blotted the face of the alkali, which, being reached and entered, spread like fire until it, too, filled the whole plain—until it, too, arrogated to itself the right of typifying Soda Springs Valley as a shimmering prairie of mesquite. Flowered upland, dead lowland, brush, cactus, volcanic rock, sand, each of these for the time being occupied the whole space, broad as the sea. In the circlet of the mountains was room for many infinities.

Among the foothills Señor Johnson, for the first time, appreciated colour. Hundreds of acres of flowers filled the velvet creases of the little hills and washed over the smooth, rounded slopes so accurately in the placing and manner of tinted shadows that the mind had difficulty in believing the colour not to have been shaded in actually by free sweeps of some gigantic brush. A dozen shades of pinks and purples, a dozen of blues, and then the flame reds, the yellows, and the vivid greens. Beyond were the mountains in their glory of volcanic rocks, rich as the tapestry of a Florentine palace. And, modifying all the others, the tinted atmosphere of the southwest, refracting the sun through the infinitesimal earth motes thrown up constantly by the wind devils of the desert, drew before the scene a delicate and gauzy veil of lilac, of rose, of saffron, of amethyst, or of mauve, according to the time of day. Señor Johnson discovered that looking at the landscape upside down accentuated the colour effects. It amused him vastly suddenly to bend over his saddle horn, the top of his head nearly touching his horse's mane. The distant mountains at once started out into redder prominence; their shadows of purple deepened to the royal colour; the rose veil thickened.

"She's the prettiest country God ever made!" exclaimed Señor Johnson with entire conviction.

And no matter where he went, nor into how familiar country he rode, the shapes of illusion offered always variety. One day the Chiricahuas were a tableland; next day a series of castellated peaks; now an anvil; now a saw tooth; and rarely they threw a magnificent suspension bridge across the heavens to their neighbours, the ranges on the west. Lakes rippling in the wind and breaking on the shore, cattle big as elephants or small as rabbits, distances that did not exist and forests that never were, beds of lava along the hills wearing to a cloud shadow, while the sky was polished like a precious stone—these, and many other beautiful and marvellous but empty shows the great desert displayed lavishly, with the glitter and inconsequence of a dream. Señor Johnson sat on his horse in the hot sun, his chin in his hand, his elbow on the pommel, watching it all with grave, unshifting eyes.

Occasionally, belated, he saw the stars, the wonderful desert stars, blazing clear and unflickering, like the flames of candles. Or the moon worked her necromancies, hemming him in by mountains ten thousand feet high through which there was no pass. And then as he rode, the mountains shifted like the scenes in a theatre, and he crossed the little sand dunes out from the dream country to the adobe corrals of the home ranch.

All these things, and many others, Señor Johnson now saw for the first time, although he had lived among them for twenty years. It struck him with the freshness of a surprise. Also it reacted chemically on his mental processes to generate a new power within him. The new power, being as yet unapplied, made him uneasy and restless and a little irritable.

He tried to show some of his wonders to Parker.

"Jed," said he, one day, "this is a great country."

"You *know* it," replied the foreman.

"Those tourists in their nickel-plated Pullmans call this a desert. Desert, hell! Look at them flowers!"

The foreman cast an eye on a glorious silken mantle of purple, a hundred yards broad.

"Sure," he agreed; "shows what we could do if we only had a little water."

And again: "Jed," began the Señor, "did you ever notice the mountains?"

"Sure," agreed Jed.

"Ain't that a pretty colour?"

"You bet," agreed the foreman; "now you're talking! I always said they was mineralised enough to make a good prospect."

This was unsatisfactory. Señor Johnson grew more restless. His critical eye began to take account of small details. At the ranch house one evening he, on a sudden, bellowed loudly for Sang, the Chinese servant.

"Look at these!" he roared, when Sang appeared.

Sang's eyes opened in bewilderment.

"There, and there!" shouted the cattleman. "Look at them old newspapers and them gun rags! The place is like a cow-yard. Why in the name of heaven don't you clean up here!"

"Allee light," babbled Sang; "I clean him."

The papers and gun rags had lain there unnoticed for nearly a year. Señor Johnson kicked them savagely.

"It's time we took a brace here," he growled; "we're livin' like a lot of Oilers."*

CHAPTER THREE

THE PAPER A YEAR OLD

SANG hurried out for a broom. Señor Johnson sat where he was, his heavy, square brows knit. Suddenly he stooped, seized one of the newspapers, drew near the lamp, and began to read.

It was a Kansas City paper and, by a strange coincidence, was dated exactly a year before. The sheet Señor Johnson happened to pick up was one usually passed over by the average newspaper reader. It contained only columns of little two- and three-line advertisements classified as Help Wanted, Situations Wanted, Lost and Found, and Personal. The latter items Señor Johnson commenced to read while awaiting Sang and the broom.

The notices were five in number. The first three were of the mysterious newspaper-correspondence type, in which Birdie beseeches Jack to meet her at the fountain; the fourth advertised a clairvoyant. Over the fifth Señor Johnson paused long. It read:

WANTED.—By an intelligent and refined lady of pleasing appearance, correspondence with a gentleman of means. Object matrimony.

Just then Sang returned with the broom and began noisily to sweep together the débris. The rustling of papers aroused Señor Johnson from his reverie. At once he exploded.

"Get out of here, you debased Mongolian," he shouted; "can't you see I'm reading?"

Sang fled, sorely puzzled, for the Señor was calm and unexcited and aloof in his everyday habit.

Soon Jed Parker, tall, wiry, hawk-nosed, deliberate, came into the room and flung his broad hat and spurs into the corner. Then he proceeded to light his pipe and threw the burned match on the floor.

"Been over to look at the Grant Pass range," he announced cheerfully. "She's no good. Drier than cork legs. Th' country wouldn't support three horned toads."

"Jed," quoth the Señor solemnly, "I wisht you'd hang up your hat like I have. It don't look good there on the floor."

"Why, sure," agreed Jed, with an astonished stare.

Sang brought in supper and slung it on the red and white squares of oilcloth. Then he moved the lamp and retired.

Señor Johnson gazed with distaste into his cup.

"This coffee would float a wedge," he commented sourly.

"She's no puling infant," agreed the cheerful Jed.

"And this!" went on the Señor, picking up what purported to be plum duff: "Bog down a few currants in dough and call her pudding!"

He ate in silence, then pushed back his chair and went to the window, gazing through its grimy panes at the mountains, ethereal in their evening saffron.

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* Oilers: Greasers—Mexicans.

"Blamed Chink," he growled; "why don't he wash these windows?"

Jed laid down his busy knife and idle fork to gaze on his chief with amazement. Buck Johnson, the austere, the aloof, the grimly taciturn, the dangerous, to be thus complaining like a querulous woman!

"Señor," said he, "you're off your feed."

Señor Johnson strode savagely to the table and sat down with a bang.

"I'm sick of it," he growled; "this thing will kill me off. I might as well go be a buck nun and be done with it."

With one round-arm sweep he cleared aside the dishes.

"Give me that pen and paper behind you," he requested.

For an hour he wrote and destroyed. The floor became littered with torn papers. Then he enveloped a meagre result. Parker had watched him in silence. The Señor looked up to catch his speculative eye. His own eye twinkled a little, but the twinkle was determined and sinister, with only an alloy of humour.

"Señor," ventured Parker slowly, "this event sure knocks me hell-west and crooked. If the loco you have culled hasn't paralysed your speaking parts, would you mind telling me what in the name of heaven, hell, and high-water is up?"

"I am going to get married," announced the Señor calmly.

"What!" shouted Parker; "who to?"

"To a lady," replied the Señor, "an intelligent and refined lady—of pleasing appearance."

CHAPTER FOUR

DREAMS

Although the paper was a year old, Señor Johnson in due time received an answer from Kansas. A correspondence ensued. Señor Johnson enshrined above the big fireplace the photograph of a woman. Before this he used to stand for hours at a time slowly constructing in his mind what he had hitherto lacked—an ideal of woman and of home. This ideal he used sometimes to express to himself and to the ironical Jed.

"It must sure be nice to have a little woman waitin' for you when you come in off'n the desert."

Or: "Now, a woman would have them windows just blooming with flowers and white curtains and such truck."

Or: "I bet that Sang would get a wiggle on him with his little old cleaning duds if he had a woman ahold of his jerk line."

Slowly he reconstructed his life, the life of the ranch, in terms of this hypothesised feminine influence. Then matters came to an understanding. Señor Johnson had sent his own portrait. Estrella Sands wrote back that she adored big black beards, but she was afraid of him, he had such a fascinating bad eye: no woman could resist him. Señor Johnson at once took things for granted, sent on to Kansas a preposterous sum of "expense" money and a railroad ticket, and raided Goodrich's store at Willets, a hundred miles away, for all manner of gaudy carpets, silverware, fancy lamps, works of art, pianos, linen, and gimcracks for the adornment of the ranch house. Furthermore, he offered wages more than equal to a hundred miles of desert to a young Irish girl, named Susie O'Toole, to come out as housekeeper, decorator, boss of Sang and another Chinaman, and companion to Mrs. Johnson when she should arrive.

Furthermore, he laid off from the range work Brent Palmer, the most skilful man with horses, and set him to "gentling" a beautiful little sorrel. A side-saddle had arrived from El Paso. It was "centre fire," which is to say it had but the single horsehair cinch, broad, tasselled, very genteel in its suggestion of pleasure use only. Brent could be seen at all times of day, cantering here and there on the sorrel, a blanket tied around his waist to simulate the long riding skirt. He carried also a sulky and evil gleam in his eye, warning against undue levity.

Jed Parker watched these various proceedings sardonically.

Once, the baby light of innocence blue in his eye, he inquired if he would be required to dress for dinner.

"If so," he went on, "I'll have my man brush up my low-necked clothes."

But Señor Johnson refused to be baited.

"Go on, Jed," said he; "you know you ain't got clothes enough to dust a fiddle."

The Señor was happy these days. He showed it by an unwonted joviality of spirit, by a slight but evident unbending of his Spanish dignity. No longer did the splendour of the desert fill him with a vague yearning and uneasiness. He looked upon it confidently, noting its various phases with care, rejoicing in each new development of colour and light, of form and illusion, storing them away in his memory so that their recurrence should find him prepared to recognise and explain them. For soon he would have someone by his side with whom to appreciate them. In that sharing he could see the reason for them, the reason for their strange bitter-sweet effects on the human soul.

One evening he leaned on the corral fence, looking toward the Dragoons. The sun had set behind them. Gigantic they loomed against the western light. From their summits, like an aureola, radiated the splendour of the dust-moted air, this evening a deep umber. A faint reflection of it fell across the desert, glorifying the reaches of its nothingness.

"I'll take her out on an evening like this," quoth Señor Johnson to himself, "and I'll make her keep her eyes on the ground till we get right up by Running Bear Knob, and then I'll let her look up all to once. And she'll surely enjoy this life. I bet she never saw a steer roped in her life. She can ride with me every day out over the range and I'll show her the busting and the branding and that band of antelope over by the Tall Windmill. I'll teach her to shoot, too. And we can make little pack trips off in the hills when she gets too hot—up there by Deerskin Meadows 'mongst the high peaks."

He mused, turning over in his mind a new picture of his own life, aims, and pursuits as modified by the sympathetic and understanding companionship of a woman. He pictured himself as he must seem to her in his different pursuits. The picturesqueness pleased him. The simple, direct vanity of the man—the wholesome vanity of a straightforward nature—awakened to preen its feathers before the idea of the mate.

The shadows fell. Over the Chiricahuas flared the evening star. The plain, self-luminous with the weird lucence of the arid lands, showed ghostly. Jed Parker, coming out from the lamp-lit adobe, leaned his elbows on the rail in silent company with his chief. He, too, looked abroad. His mind's eye saw what his body's eye had always told him were the insistent notes—the alkali, the cactus, the sage, the mesquite, the lava, the choking dust, the blinding heat, the burning thirst. He sighed in the dim half recollection of past days.

"I wonder if she'll like the country?" he hazarded.

But Señor Johnson turned on him his steady eyes, filled with the great glory of the desert.

"Like the country!" he marvelled slowly. "Of course! Why shouldn't she?"

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ARRIVAL

The Overland drew into Willets, coated from engine to observation with white dust. A porter, in strange contrast of neatness, flung open the vestibule, dropped his little carpeted step, and turned to assist someone. A few idle passengers gazed out on the uninteresting, flat frontier town.

Señor Johnson caught his breath in amazement. "God! Ain't she just like her picture!" he exclaimed. He seemed to find this astonishing.

For a moment he did not step forward to claim her, so she stood looking about her uncertainly, her leather suit-case at her feet.

She was indeed like the photograph. The same full-curved, compact little figure, the same round face, the same cupid's bow mouth, the same appealing, large eyes, the same haze of doll's hair. In a moment she caught sight of Señor Johnson and took two steps toward him, then stopped. The Señor at once came forward.

"You're Mr. Johnson, ain't you?" she inquired, thrusting her little pointed chin forward, and so elevating her baby-blue eyes to his.

"Yes, ma'am," he acknowledged formally. Then after a moment's pause: "I hope you're well."

"Yes, thank you."

The station loungers, augmented by all the ranchmen and cowboys in town, were examining her closely. She looked at them in a swift side glance that seemed to gather all their eyes to hers. Then, satisfied that she possessed the universal admiration, she returned the full force of her attention to the man before her.

"Now you give me your trunk checks," he was saying, "and then we'll go right over and get married."

"Oh!" she gasped.

"That's right, ain't it?" he demanded.

"Yes, I suppose so," she agreed faintly.

A little subdued, she followed him to the clergyman's house, where, in the presence of Goodrich, the storekeeper, and the preacher's wife, the two were united. Then they mounted the buckboard and drove from town.

Señor Johnson said nothing, because he knew of nothing to say. He drove skilfully and fast through the gathering dusk. It was a hundred miles to the home ranch, and that hundred miles, by means of five relays of horses already arranged for, they would cover by morning. Thus they would avoid the dust and heat and high winds of the day.

The sweet night fell. The little desert winds laid soft fingers on their cheeks. Overhead burned the stars, clear, unflickering, like candles. Dimly could be seen the horses, their flanks swinging steadily in the square trot. Ghostly bushes passed them; ghostly rock elevations. Far, in indeterminate distance, lay the outlines of the mountains. Always, they seemed to recede. The plain, all but invisible, the wagon trail quite so, the depths of space—these flung heavy on the soul their weight of mysticism. The woman, until now bolt upright in the buckboard seat, shrank nearer to the man. He felt against his sleeve the delicate contact of her garment and thrilled to the touch. A coyote barked sharply from a neighbouring eminence, then trailed off into the long-drawn, shrill howl of his species.

"What was that?" she asked quickly, in a subdued voice.

"A coyote—one of them little wolves," he explained.

The horses' hoofs rang clear on a hardened bit of the alkali crust, then dully as they encountered again the dust of the plain. Vast, vague, mysterious in the silence of night, filled with strange influences breathing through space like damp winds, the desert took them to the heart of her great spaces.

"Buck," she whispered, a little tremblingly. It was the first time she had spoken his name.

"What is it?" he asked, a new note in his voice.

But for a time she did not reply. Only the contact against his sleeve increased by ever so little.

"Buck," she repeated, then all in a rush and with a sob, "Oh, I'm afraid."

Tenderly the man drew her to him. Her head fell against his shoulder and she hid her eyes.

"There, little girl," he reassured her, his big voice rich and musical. "There's nothing to get scairt of. I'll take care of you. What frightens you, honey?"

She nestled close in his arm with a sigh of half relief.

"I don't know," she laughed, but still with a tremble in her tones. "It's all so big and lonesome and strange—and I'm so little."

"There, little girl," he repeated.

They drove on and on. At the end of two hours they stopped. Men with lanterns dazzled their eyes. The horses were changed, and so out again into the night where the desert seemed to breathe in deep, mysterious exhalations like a sleeping beast.

Señor Johnson drove his horses masterfully with his one free hand. The road did not exist, except to his trained eyes. They seemed to be swimming out, out, into a vapour of night with the wind of their going steady against their faces.

"Buck," she murmured, "I'm so tired."

He tightened his arm around her and she went to sleep, half-waking at the ranches where the relays waited, dozing again as soon as the lanterns dropped behind. And Señor Johnson, alone with his horses and the solemn stars, drove on, ever on, into the desert.

By grey of the early summer dawn they arrived. The girl wakened, descended, smiling uncertainly at Susie O'Toole, blinking somnolently at her surroundings. Susie put her to bed in the little southwest room where hung the shiny Colt's forty-five in its worn leather "Texas-style" holster. She murmured incoherent thanks and sank again to sleep, overcome by the fatigue of unaccustomed travelling, by the potency of the desert air, by the excitement of anticipation to which her nerves had long been strung.

Señor Johnson did not sleep. He was tough, and used to it. He lit a cigar and rambled about, now reading the newspapers he had brought with him, now prowling softly about the building, now visiting the corrals and outbuildings, once even the thousand-acre pasture where his saddle-horse knew him and came to him to have its forehead rubbed.

The dawn broke in good earnest, throwing aside its gauzy draperies of mauve. Sang, the Chinese cook, built his fire. Señor Johnson forbade him to clang the rising bell, and himself roused the cowpunchers. The girl slept on. Señor Johnson tiptoed a dozen times to the bedroom door. Once he ventured to push it open. He looked long within, then shut it softly and tiptoed out into the open, his eyes shining.

"Jed," he said to his foreman, "you don't know how it made me feel. To see her lying there so pink and soft and pretty, with her yaller hair all tumbled about and a little smile on her—there in my old bed, with my old gun hanging over her that way—— By Heaven, Jed, it made me feel almost *holy!*"

CHAPTER SIX

THE WAGON TIRE

About noon she emerged from the room, fully refreshed and wide awake. She and Susie O'Toole had unpacked at least one of the trunks, and now she stood arrayed in shirt-waist and blue skirt.

At once she stepped into the open air and looked about her with considerable curiosity.

"So this is a real cattle ranch," was her comment.

Señor Johnson was at her side pressing on her with boyish eagerness the sights of the place. She patted the stag hounds and inspected the garden. Then, confessing herself hungry, she obeyed with alacrity Sang's call to an early meal. At the table she ate coquettishly, throwing her birdlike side glances at the man opposite.

"I want to see a real cowboy," she announced, as she pushed her chair back.

"Why, sure!" cried Señor Johnson joyously. "Sang! hi, Sang! Tell Brent Palmer to step in here a minute."

After an interval the cowboy appeared, mincing in on his high-heeled boots, his silver spurs jingling, the fringe of his chaps impacting softly on the leather. He stood at ease, his broad hat in both hands, his dark, level brows fixed on his chief.

"Shake hands with Mrs. Johnson, Brent. I called you in because she said she wanted to see a real cow-puncher."

"Oh, *Buck!*" cried the woman.

For an instant the cow-puncher's level brows drew together. Then he caught the woman's glance fair. He smiled.

"Well, I ain't much to look at," he proffered.

"That's not for you to say, sir," said Estrella, recovering.

"Brent, here, gentled your pony for you," exclaimed Señor Johnson.

"Oh!" cried Estrella, "have I a pony? How nice! And it was so good of you, Mr. Brent. Can't I see him? I want to see him. I want to give him a piece of sugar." She fumbled in the bowl.

"Sure, you can see him. I don't know as he'll eat sugar. He ain't that educated. Think you could teach him to eat sugar, Brent?"

"I reckon," replied the cowboy.

They went out toward the corral, the cowboy joining them as a matter of course. Estrella demanded explanations as she went along. Their progress was leisurely. The blindfolded pump mule interested her.

"And he goes round and round that way all day without stopping, thinking he's really getting somewhere!" she marvelled. "I think that's a shame! Poor old fellow, to get fooled that way!"

"It is some foolish," said Brent Palmer, "but he ain't any worse off than a cow-pony that hikes out twenty mile and then twenty back."

"No, I suppose not," admitted Estrella.

"And we got to have water, you know," added Señor Johnson.

Brent rode up the sorrel bareback. The pretty animal, gentle as a kitten, nevertheless planted his forefeet strongly and snorted at Estrella.

"I reckon he ain't used to the sight of a woman," proffered the Señor, disappointed. "He'll get used to you. Go up to him soft-like and rub him between the eyes."

Estrella approached, but the pony jerked back his head with every symptom of distrust. She forgot the sugar she had intended to offer him.

"He's a perfect beauty," she said at last, "but, my! I'd never dare ride him. I'm awful scairt of horses."

"Oh, he'll come around all right," assured Brent easily. "I'll fix him."

"Oh, Mr. Brent," she exclaimed, "don't think I don't appreciate what you've done. I'm sure he's really just as gentle as he can be. It's only that I'm foolish."

"I'll fix him," repeated Brent.

The two men conducted her here and there, showing her the various institutions of the place. A man bent near the shed nailing a shoe to a horse's hoof.

"So you even have a blacksmith!" said Estrella. Her guides laughed amusedly.

"Tommy, come here!" called the Señor.

The horseshoer straightened up and approached. He was a lithe, curly-haired young boy, with a reckless, humorous eye and a smooth face, now red from bending over.

"Tommy, shake hands with Mrs. Johnson," said the Señor. "Mrs. Johnson wants to know if you're the blacksmith." He exploded in laughter.

"Oh, *Buck!*" cried Estrella again.

"No, ma'am," answered the boy directly;

"I'm just tacking a shoe on Danger, here. We all does our own blacksmithing."

His roving eye examined her countenance respectfully, but with admiration. She caught the admiration and returned it, covertly but unmistakably, pleased that her charms were appreciated.

They continued their rounds. The sun was very hot and the dust deep. A woman would have known that these things distressed Estrella. She picked her way through the débris; she dropped her head from the burning; she felt her delicate garments moistening with perspiration, her hair dampening; the dust sifted up through the air. Over in the large corral a bronco buster, assisted by two of the cowboys, was engaged in roping and throwing some wild mustangs. The sight was wonderful, but here the dust billowed in clouds.

"I'm getting a little hot and tired," she confessed at last. "I think I'll go to the house."

But near the shed she stopped again, interested in spite of herself by a bit of repairing Tommy had under way. The tire of a wagon wheel had been destroyed. Tommy was mending it. On the ground lay a fresh cowhide. From this Tommy was cutting a wide strip. As she watched he measured the strip around the circumference of the wheel.

"He isn't going to make a tire of that!" she exclaimed, incredulously.

"Sure," replied Señor Johnson.

"Will it wear?"

"It'll wear for a month or so, till we can get another from town."

Estrella advanced and felt curiously of the rawhide. Tommy was fastening it to the wheel at the ends only.

"But how can it stay on that way?" she objected. "It'll come right off as soon as you use it."

"It'll harden on tight enough."

"Why?" she persisted. "Does it shrink much when it dries?"

Señor Johnson stared to see if she might be joking. "Does it shrink?" he repeated slowly. "There ain't nothing shrinks more, nor harder. It'll mighty nigh break that wood."

Estrella, incredulous, interested, she could not have told why, stooped again to feel the soft, yielding hide. She shook her head.

"You're joking me because I'm a tenderfoot," she accused brightly. "I know it dries hard, and I'll believe it shrinks a lot, but to break wood—that's piling it on a little thick."

"No, that's right, ma'am," broke in Brent Palmer. "It's awful strong. It pulls like a horse when the desert sun gets on it. You wrap anything up in a piece of that hide and see what happens. Some time you take and wrap a piece around a potato and put her out in the sun and see how it'll squeeze the water out of her."

"Is that so?" she appealed to Tommy. "I can't tell when they are making fun of me."

"Yes, ma'am, that's right," he assured her.

Estrella passed a strip of the flexible hide playfully about her wrists.

"And if I let that dry that way I'd be handcuffed hard and fast," she said.

"It would cut you down to the bone," supplemented Brent Palmer.

She untwisted the strip, and stood looking at it, her eyes wide.

"I—I don't know why——" she faltered. "The thought makes me a little sick. Why, isn't it queer? Ugh! it's like a snake!" She flung it from her energetically and turned toward the ranch house.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ESTRELLA

The honeymoon developed and the necessary adjustments took place. The latter Señor Johnson had not foreseen; and yet, when the necessity for them arose, he acknowledged them right and proper.

"Course she don't want to ride over to Circle I with us," he informed his confidant, Jed Parker. "It's a long ride, and she ain't used to riding yet. Trouble is I've been thinking of doing things with her just as if she was a man. Women are different. They likes different things."

This second idea gradually overlaid the first in Señor Johnson's mind. Estrella showed little aptitude or interest in the rougher side of life. Her husband's statement as to her being still unused to riding was distinctly a euphemism. Estrella never arrived at the point of feeling safe on a horse. In time she gave up trying, and the sorrel drifted back to cow-punching. The range work she never understood. As a spectacle it imposed itself on her interest for a week; but since she could discover no real and vital concern in the welfare of cows, soon the mere outward show became an old story. Estrella's sleek nature avoided instinctively all that interfered with bodily well-being. When she was cool and well-fed and not thirsty, and surrounded by a proper degree of feminine daintiness, then she was ready to amuse herself. But she could not understand the desirability of those pleasures for which a certain price in discomfort must be paid. As for firearms, she confessed herself frankly afraid of them. That was the point at which her intimacy with them stopped.

The natural level to which these waters fell is easily seen. Quite simply, the Señor found that a wife does not enter fully into her husband's workaday life. The dreams he had dreamed did not come true.

This was at first a disappointment to him, of course, but the disappointment did not last. Señor Johnson was a man of sense, and he easily modified his first scheme of married life.

"She'd get sick of it, and I'd get sick of it," he formulated his new philosophy. "Now I got something to come back to, somebody to look forward to. And it's a *woman*, it ain't one of these darn gangle-leg cowgirls. The great thing is to feel you *belong* to someone; and that someone nice and cool and fresh and purty is waitin' for you when you come in tired. It beats that other little old idee of mine slick as a gun barrel."

So, during this, the busy season of the range riding, immediately before the great fall round-ups, Señor Johnson rode abroad all day, and returned to his own hearth as many evenings of the week as he could. Estrella always saw him coming and stood in the doorway to greet him. He kicked off his spurs, washed and dusted himself, and spent the evening with his wife. He liked the sound of exactly that phrase, and was fond of repeating it to himself in a variety of connections.

"When I get in I'll spend the evening with my wife." "If I don't ride over to Circle I, I'll spend the evening with my wife," and so on. He had a good deal to tell her of the day's discoveries, the state of the range, and the condition of the cattle. To all of this she listened at least with patience. Señor Johnson, like most men who have long delayed marriage, was self-centred without knowing it. His interest in his mate had to do with her personality rather than with her doings.

"What you do with yourself all day today?" he occasionally inquired.

"Oh, there's lots to do," she would answer, a trifle listlessly; and this reply always seemed quite to satisfy his interest in the subject.

Señor Johnson, with a curiously instant transformation often to be observed among the adventurous, settled luxuriously into the state of being a married man. Its smallest details gave him distinct and separate sensations of pleasure.

"I plumb likes it all," he said. "I likes havin' interest in some fool geranium plant, and I likes worryin' about the screen doors and all the rest of the plumb foolishness. It does me good. It feels like stretchin' your legs in front of a good, warm fire."

The centre, the compelling influence of this new state of affairs, was undoubtedly Estrella, and yet it is equally to be doubted whether she stood for more than the suggestion. Señor Johnson conducted his entire life with reference to his wife. His waking hours were concerned only with the thought of her, his every act revolved in its orbit controlled by her influence. Nevertheless she, as an individual human being, had little to do with it. Señor Johnson referred his life to a state of affairs he had himself invented and which he called the married state, and to a woman whose attitude he had himself determined upon and whom he designated as his wife. The actual state of affairs—whatever it might be—he did not see; and the actual woman supplied merely the material medium necessary to the reality of his idea. Whether Estrella's eyes were interested or bored, bright or dull, alert or abstracted, contented or afraid, Señor Johnson could not have told you. He might have replied promptly enough—that they were happy and loving. That is the way Señor Johnson conceived a wife's eyes.

The routine of life, then, soon settled. After breakfast the Señor insisted that his wife accompany him on a short tour of inspection. "A little *pasear*," he called it, "just to get set for the day." Then his horse was brought, and he rode away on whatever business called him. Like a true son of the alkali, he took no lunch with him, nor expected his horse to feed until his return. This was an hour before sunset. The evening passed as has been described. It was all very simple.

When the business hung close to the ranch house—as in the bronco-busting, the rebranding of bought cattle, and the like—he was able to share his wife's day. Estrella conducted herself dreamily, with a slow smile for him when his actual presence insisted on her attention. She seemed much given to staring out over the desert. Señor Johnson, appreciatively, thought he could understand this. Again, she gave much leisure to rocking back and forth on the low, wide veranda, her hands idle, her eyes vacant, her lips dumb. Susie O'Toole had early proved incompatible and had gone.

"A nice, contented, home sort of a woman," said Señor Johnson.

One thing alone besides the desert, on which she never seemed tired of looking, fascinated her. Whenever a beef was killed for the uses of the ranch, she commanded strips of the green skin. Then like a child, she bound them and sewed them and nailed them to substances particularly susceptible to their constricting power. She choked the necks of green gourds, she indented the tender bark of cottonwood shoots, she expended an apparently exhaustless ingenuity on the fabrication of mechanical devices whose principle answered to the pulling of the drying rawhide. And always along the adobe fence could be seen a long row of potatoes bound in skin, some of them fresh and smooth and round; some sweating in the agony of squeezing; some wrinkled and dry and little, the last drops of life tortured out of them. Señor Johnson laughed good-humouredly at these toys, puzzled to explain their fascination for his wife.

"They're sure an amusing enough contraption, honey," said he, "but what makes you stand out there in the hot sun staring at them that way? It's cooler on the porch."

"I don't know," said Estrella, helplessly, turning her slow, vacant gaze on him. Suddenly she shivered in a strong physical revulsion. "I don't know!" she cried with passion.

After they had been married about a month Señor Johnson found it necessary to drive into Willets.

"How would you like to go, too, and buy some duds?" he asked Estrella.

"Oh!" she cried strangely. "When?"

"Day after to-morrow."

The trip decided, her entire attitude changed. The vacancy of her gaze lifted; her movements quickened; she left off staring at the desert, and her rawhide toys were neglected. Before starting, Señor Johnson gave her a check book. He explained that there were no banks in Willets, but that Goodrich, the storekeeper, would honour her signature.

"Buy what you want to, honey," said he. "Tear her wide open. I'm good for it."

"How much can I draw?" she asked, smiling.

"As much as you want to," he replied with emphasis.

"Take care"—she poised before him with the check book extended—"I may draw—I might draw fifty thousand dollars."

"Not out of Goodrich," he grinned; "you'd bust the game. But hold him up for the limit, anyway."

He chuckled aloud, pleased at the rare, bird-like coquetry of the woman. They drove to Willets. It took them two days to go and two days to return. Estrella went through the town in a cyclone burst of enthusiasm, saw everything, bought everything, exhausted everything in two hours. Willets was not a large place. On her return to the ranch she sat down at once in the rocking-chair on the veranda. Her hands fell into her lap. She stared out over the desert.

Señor Johnson stole up behind her, clumsy as a playful bear. His eyes followed the direction of hers to where a cloud shadow lay across the slope, heavy, palpable, untransparent, like a blotch of ink.

"Pretty, isn't it, honey?" said he. "Glad to get back?"

She smiled at him her vacant, slow smile.

"Here's my check book," she said; "put it away for me. I'm through with it."

"I'll put it in my desk," said he. "It's in the left-hand cubby-hole," he called from inside.

"Very well," she replied.

He stood in the doorway, looking fondly at her unconscious shoulders and the pose of her blonde head thrown back against the high rocking-chair.

"That's the sort of a woman, after all," said Señor Johnson. "No blame fuss about her."

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ROUND-UP

This, as you well may gather, was in the summer routine. Now the time of the great fall round-up drew near. The home ranch began to bustle in preparation.

All through Cochise County were short mountain ranges set down, apparently at random, like a child's blocks. In and out between them flowed the broad, plain-like valleys. On the valleys were the various ranges, great or small, controlled by the different individuals of the Cattlemen's Association. During the year an unimportant, but certain, shifting of stock took place. A few cattle of Señor Johnson's Lazy Y eluded the vigilance of his riders to drift over through the Grant Pass and into the ranges of his neighbour; equally, many of the neighbour's steers watered daily at Señor Johnson's troughs. It was a matter of courtesy to permit this, but one of the reasons for the fall round-up was a redistribution to the proper ranges. Each cattleowner sent an outfit to the scene of labour. The combined outfits moved slowly from one valley to another, cutting out the strays, branding the late calves, collecting for the owner of that particular range all his stock, that he might select his marketable beef. In turn each cattleman was host to his neighbours and their men.

This year it had been decided to begin the circle of the round-up at the C O Bar, near the banks of the San Pedro. Thence it would work eastward, wandering slowly in north and south deviation, to include all the country, until the final break-up would occur at the Lazy Y.

The Lazy Y crew was to consist of four men, thirty riding horses, a "chuck wagon," and cook. These helping others, and receiving help in turn, would suffice, for in the round-up labour was pooled to a common end. With them would ride Jed Parker, to safeguard his master's interests.

For a week the punchers, in their daily rides, gathered in the range ponies. Señor Johnson owned fifty horses which he maintained at the home ranch for every-day riding, two hundred broken saddle animals, allowed the freedom of the range, except when special occasion demanded their use, and perhaps half a thousand quite unbroken—brood mares, stallions, young horses, broncos, and the like. At this time of year it was his habit to corral all those saddlewise in order to select horses for the round-ups and to replace the ranch animals. The latter he turned loose for their turn at the freedom of the range.

The horses chosen, next the men turned their attention to outfit. Each had, of course, his saddle, spurs, and "rope." Of the latter the chuck wagon carried many extra. That vehicle, furthermore, transported such articles as the blankets, the tarpaulins under which to sleep, the running irons for branding, the cooking layout, and the men's personal effects. All was in readiness to move for the six weeks' circle, when a complication arose. Jed Parker, while nimbly escaping an irritated steer, twisted the high heel of his boot on the corral fence. He insisted the injury amounted to nothing. Señor Johnson, however, disagreed.

"It don't amount to nothing, Jed," he pronounced, after manipulation, "but she might make a good able-bodied injury with a little coaxing. Rest her a week and then you'll be all right."

"Rest her, the devil!" growled Jed; "who's going to San Pedro?"

"I will, of course," replied the Señor promptly. "Didje think we'd send the Chink?"

"I was first cousin to a Yaqui jackass for sendin' young Billy Ellis out. He'll be back in a week. He'd do."

"So'd the President," the Señor pointed out; "I hear he's had some experience."

"I hate to have you to go," objected Jed. "There's the missis." He shot a glance sideways at his chief.

"I guess she and I can stand it for a week," scoffed the latter. "Why, we're old married folks by now. Besides, you can take care of her."

"I'll try," said Jed Parker, a little grimly.

CHAPTER NINE

THE LONG TRAIL

The round-up crew started early the next morning, just about sun-up. Señor Johnson rode first, merely to keep out of the dust. Then followed Tom Rich, jogging along easily in the cow-puncher's "Spanish trot," whistling soothingly to quiet the horses, giving a lead to the band of saddle animals strung out loosely behind him. These moved on gracefully and lightly in the manner of the unburdened plains horse, half decided to follow Tom's guidance, half inclined to break to right or left. Homer and Jim Lester flanked them, also riding in a slouch of apparent laziness, but every once in a while darting forward like bullets to turn back into the main herd certain individuals whom the early morning of the unwearied day had inspired to make a dash for liberty. The rear was brought up by Jerky Jones, the fourth cow-puncher, and the four-mule chuck wagon, lost in its own dust.

The sun mounted; the desert went silently through its changes. Wind devils raised straight, true columns of dust six, eight hundred, even a thousand feet into the air. The billows of dust from the horses and men crept and crawled with them like a living creature. Glorious colour, magnificent distance, astonishing illusion, filled the world.

Señor Johnson rode ahead, looking at these things. The separation from his wife, brief as it would be, left room in his soul for the heart-hunger which beauty arouses in men. He loved the charm of the desert, yet it hurt him.

Behind the punchers relieved the tedium of the march, each after his own manner. In an hour the bunch of loose horses lost its early-morning good spirits and settled down to a steady plodding that needed no supervision. Tom Rich led them, now, in silence, his time fully occupied in rolling Mexican cigarettes with one hand. The other three dropped back together and exchanged desultory remarks. Occasionally Jim Lester sang. It was always the same song of uncounted verses, but Jim had a strange fashion of singing a single verse at a time. After a long interval he would sing another:

"My Love is a rider
And broncos he breaks,
But he's given up riding
And all for my sake,
For he found him a horse
And it suited him so
That he vowed he'd ne'er ride
Any other bronco!"

he warbled, and then in the same breath:

"Say, boys, did you get onto the *pisano*-looking shorthorn at Willets last week?"

"Nope."

"He sifted in wearin' one of these hard-boiled hats, and carryin' a brogue thick enough to skate on. Says he wants a job drivin' team—that he drives a truck plenty back to St. Louis, where he comes from. Goodrich sets him behind them little pinto cavallos he has. Say! that son of a gun a driver! He couldn't drive nails in a snow bank." An expressive free-hand gesture told all there was to tell of the runaway. "Th' shorthorn landed headfirst in Goldfish Charlie's horse trough. Charlie fishes him out. 'How the devil, stranger,' says Charlie, 'did you come to fall in here?' 'You blamed fool,' says the shorthorn, just cryin' mad, 'I didn't come to fall in here, I come to drive horses.'"

And then, without a transitory pause:

"Oh, my Love has a gun
And that gun he can use,
But he's quit his gun fighting
As well as his booze.
And he's sold him his saddle,
His spurs, and his rope,
And there's no more cow-punching
And that's what I hope."

The alkali dust, swirled back by a little breeze, billowed up and choked him. Behind, the mules coughed, their coats whitening with the powder. Far ahead in the distance lay the westerly mountains. They looked an hour away, and yet every man and beast in the outfit knew that hour after hour they were doomed, by the enchantment of the land, to plod ahead without apparently getting an inch nearer. The only salvation was to forget the mountains and to fill the present moment full of little things.

But Señor Johnson, to-day found himself unable to do this. In spite of his best efforts he caught himself straining toward the distant goal, becoming impatient, trying to measure progress by landmarks—in short, acting like a tenderfoot on the desert, who wears himself down and dies, not from the hardship, but from the nervous strain which he does not know how to avoid. Señor Johnson knew this as well as you and I. He cursed himself vigorously, and began with great resolution to think of something else.

He was aroused from this by Tom Rich, riding alongside. "Somebody coming, Señor," said he.

Señor Johnson raised his eyes to the approaching cloud of dust. Silently the two watched it until it resolved into a rider loping easily along. In fifteen minutes he drew rein, his pony dropped immediately from a gallop to immobility, he swung into a graceful at-ease attitude across his saddle, grinned amiably, and began to roll a cigarette.

"Billy Ellis," cried Rich.

"That's me," replied the newcomer.

"Thought you were down to Tucson?"

"I was."

"Thought you wasn't comin' back for a week yet?"

"Tommy," proffered Billy Ellis dreamily, "when you go to Tucson next you watch out until you sees a little, squint-eyed Britisher. Take a look at him. Then come away. He says he don't know nothin' about poker. Mebbe he don't, but he'll outhold a warehouse."

But here Señor Johnson broke in: "Billy, you're just in time. Jed has hurt his foot and can't get on for a week yet. I want you to take charge. I got a lot to do at the ranch."

"Ain't got my war-bag," objected Billy.

"Take my stuff. I'll send yours on when Parker goes."

"All right."

"Well, so long."

"So long, Señor."

They moved. The erratic Arizona breezes twisted the dust of their going. Señor Johnson watched them dwindle. With them seemed to go the joy in the old life. No longer did the long trail possess for him its ancient fascination. He had become a domestic man.

"And I'm glad of it," commented Señor Johnson.

The dust eddied aside. Plainly could be seen the swaying wagon, the loose-riding cowboys, the gleaming, naked backs of the herd. Then the veil closed over them again. But down the wind, faintly, in snatches, came the words of Jim Lester's song:

"Oh, Sam has a gun
That has gone to the bad,
Which makes poor old Sammy
Feel pretty damn sad,
For that gun it shoots high,
And that gun it shoots low,
And it wabbles about
Like a bucking bronco!"

Señor Johnson turned and struck spurs to his willing pony.

CHAPTER TEN

THE DISCOVERY

Señor Buck Johnson loped quickly back toward the home ranch, his heart glad at this fortunate solution of his annoyance. The home ranch lay in plain sight not ten miles away. As Señor Johnson idly watched it shimmering in the heat, a tiny figure detached itself from the mass and launched itself in his direction.

"Wonder what's eating *him!*" marvelled Señor Johnson, "—and who is it?"

The figure drew steadily nearer. In half an hour it had approached near enough to be recognized.

"Why, it's Jed!" cried the Señor, and spurred his horse. "What do you mean, riding out with that foot?" he demanded sternly, when within hailing distance.

"Foot, hell!" gasped Parker, whirling his horse alongside. "Your wife's run away with Brent Palmer."

For fully ten seconds not the faintest indication proved that the husband had heard, except that he lifted his bridle-hand and the well-trained pony stopped.

"What did you say?" he asked finally.

"Your wife's run away with Brent Palmer," repeated Jed, almost with impatience.

Again the long pause.

"How do you know?" asked Señor Johnson, then.

"Know, hell! It's been going on for a month. Sang saw them drive off. They took the buckboard. He heard 'em planning it. He was too scairt to tell till they'd gone. I just found it out. They've been gone two hours. Must be going to make the Limited." Parker fidgeted, impatient to be off. "You're wasting time," he snapped at the motionless figure.

Suddenly Johnson's face flamed. He reached from his saddle to clutch Jed's shoulder, nearly pulling the foreman from his pony.

"You lie!" he cried. "You're lying to me! It ain't *so!*"

Parker made no effort to extricate himself from the painful grasp. His cool eyes met the blazing eyes of his chief.

"I wisht I did lie, Buck," he said sadly. "I wisht it wasn't so. But it is."

Johnson's head snapped back to the front with a groan. The pony snorted as the steel bit his flanks, leaped forward, and with head outstretched, nostrils wide, the wicked white of the bronco flickering in the corner of his eye, struck the bee line for the home ranch. Jed followed as fast as he was able.

On his arrival he found his chief raging about the house like a wild beast. Sang trembled from a quick and stormy interrogatory in the kitchen. Chairs had been upset and let lie. Estrella's belongings had been tumbled over. Señor Johnson there found only too sure proof, in the various lacks, of a premeditated and permanent flight. Still he hoped; and as long as he hoped, he doubted, and the demons of doubt tore him to a frenzy. Jed stood near the door, his arms folded, his weight shifted to his sound foot, waiting and wondering what the next move was to be.

Finally, Señor Johnson, struck with a new idea, ran to his desk to rummage in a pigeon-hole. But he found no need to do so, for lying on the desk was what he sought—the check book from which Estrella was to draw on Goodrich for the money she might need. He fairly snatched it open. Two of the checks had been torn out, stub and all. And then his eye caught a crumpled bit of blue paper under the edge of the desk.

He smoothed it out. The check was made out to bearer and signed Estrella Johnson. It called for fifteen thousand dollars. Across the middle was a great ink blot, reason for its rejection.

At once Señor Johnson became singularly and dangerously cool.

"I reckon you're right, Jed," he cried in his natural voice. "She's gone with him. She's got all her traps with her, and she's drawn on Goodrich for fifteen thousand. And *she* never thought of going just this time of month when the miners are in with their dust, and Goodrich would be sure to have that much. That's friend Palmer. Been going on a month, you say?"

"I couldn't say anything, Buck," said Parker anxiously. "A man's never sure enough about them things till afterwards."

"I know," agreed Buck Johnson; "give me a light for my cigarette."

He puffed for a moment, then rose, stretching his legs. In a moment he returned from the other room, the old shiny Colt's forty-five strapped loosely on his hip. Jed looked him in the face with some anxiety. The foreman was not deceived by the man's easy manner; in fact, he knew it to be symptomatic of one of the dangerous phases of Señor Johnson's character.

"What's up, Buck?" he inquired.

"Just going out for a *pasear* with the little horse, Jed."

"I suppose I better come along?"

"Not with your lame foot, Jed."

The tone of voice was conclusive. Jed cleared his throat.

"She left this for you," said he, proffering an envelope. "Them kind always writes."

"Sure," agreed Señor Johnson, stuffing the letter carelessly into his side pocket. He half drew the Colt's from its holster and slipped it back again. "Makes you feel plumb like a man to have one of these things rubbin' against you again," he observed irrelevantly. Then he went out, leaving the foreman leaning, chair tilted, against the wall.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE CAPTURE

ALTHOUGH he had left the room so suddenly, Señor Johnson did not at once open the gate of the adobe wall. His demeanour was gay, for he was a Westerner, but his heart was black. Hardly did he see beyond the convexity of his eyeballs.

The pony, warmed up by its little run, pawed the ground, impatient to be off. It was a fine animal, clean-built, deep-chested, one of the mustang stock descended from the Arabs brought over by Pizarro. Sang watched fearfully from the slant of the kitchen window. Jed Parker, even, listened for the beat of the horse's hoofs.

But Señor Johnson stood stock-still, his brain absolutely numb and empty. His hand brushed against something which fell to the ground. He brought his dull gaze to bear on it. The object proved to be a black, wrinkled spheroid, baked hard as iron in the sun—one of Estrella's toys, a potato squeezed to dryness by the constricting power of the rawhide. In a row along the fence were others. To Señor Johnson it seemed that thus his heart was being squeezed in the fire of suffering.

But the slight movement of the falling object roused him. He swung open the gate. The pony bowed his head delightedly. He was not tired, but his reins depended straight to the ground, and it was a point of honour with him to stand. At the saddle horn, in its sling, hung the riata, the "rope" without which no cowman ever stirs abroad, but which Señor Johnson had rarely used of late. Señor Johnson threw the reins over, seized the pony's mane in his left hand, held the pommel with his right, and so swung easily aboard, the pony's jump helping him to the saddle. Wheel tracks led down the trail. He followed them.

Truth to tell, Señor Johnson had very little idea of what he was going to do. His action was entirely instinctive. The wheel tracks held to the southwest, so he held to the southwest, too.

The pony hit his stride. The miles slipped by. After seven of them the animal slowed to a walk. Señor Johnson allowed him to get his wind, then spurred him on again. He did not even take the ordinary precautions of a pursuer. He did not even glance to the horizon in search.

About supper-time he came to the first ranch house. There he took a bite to eat and exchanged his horse for another, a favourite of his, named Button. The two men asked no questions.

"See Mrs. Johnson go through?" asked the Señor from the saddle.

"Yes, about three o'clock. Brent Palmer driving her. Bound for Willets to visit the preacher's wife, she said. Ought to catch up at the Circle I. That's where they'd all spend the night, of course. So long."

Señor Johnson knew now the couple

would follow the straight road. They would fear no pursuit. He himself was supposed not to return for a week, and the story of visiting the minister's wife was not only plausible, it was natural. Jed had upset calculations, because Jed was shrewd, and had eyes in his head. Buck Johnson's first mental numbness was wearing away; he was beginning to think.

The night was very still and very dark, the stars very bright in their candle-like glow. The man, loping steadily on through the darkness, recalled that other night, equally still, equally dark, equally starry, when he had driven out from his accustomed life into the unknown with a woman by his side, the sight of whom asleep had made him feel "almost holy." He uttered a short laugh.

The pony was a good one, well equal to twice the distance he would be called upon to cover this night. Señor Johnson managed him well. By long experience and a natural instinct he knew just how hard to push his mount, just how to keep inside the point where too rapid exhaustion of vitality begins.

Toward the hour of sunrise he drew rein to look about him. The desert, till now wrapped in the thousand little noises that make night silence, drew breath in preparation for the awe of the daily wonder. It lay across the world heavy as a sea of lead, and as lifeless; deeply unconscious, like an exhausted sleeper. The sky bent above, the stars paling. Far away the mountains seemed to wait. And then, imperceptibly, those in the east became blacker and sharper, while those in the west became faintly lucent and lost the distinctness of their outline. The change was nothing, yet everything. And suddenly a desert bird sprang into the air and began to sing.

Señor Johnson caught the wonder of it. The wonder of it seemed to him wasted, useless, cruel in its effect. He sighed impatiently, and drew his hand across his eyes.

The desert became grey with the first light before the glory. In the illusory revealment of it Señor Johnson's sharp frontiersman's eyes made out an object moving away from him in the middle distance. In a moment the object rose for a second against the sky line, then disappeared. He knew it to be the buckboard, and that the vehicle had just plunged into the dry bed of an arroyo.

Immediately life surged through him like an electric shock. He unfastened the riata from its sling, shook loose the noose, and moved forward in the direction in which he had last seen the buckboard.

At the top of the steep little bank he stopped behind the mesquite, straining his eyes; luck had been good to him. The buckboard had pulled up, and Brent Palmer was at the moment beginning a little fire, evidently to make the morning coffee.

Señor Johnson struck spurs to his horse and half slid, half fell, clattering, down the steep clay bank almost on top of the couple below.

Estrella screamed. Brent Palmer jerked out an oath, and reached for his gun. The loop of the riata fell wide over him, immediately to be jerked tight, binding his arms tight to his side.

The bronco-buster, swept from his feet by the pony's rapid turn, nevertheless struggled desperately to wrench himself loose. Button, intelligent at all rope work, walked steadily backward, step by step, taking up the slack, keeping the rope tight as he had done hundreds of times before when a steer had struggled as this man was struggling now. His master leaped from the saddle and ran forward. Button continued to walk slowly back. The riata remained taut. The noose held.

Brent Palmer fought savagely, even then. He kicked, he rolled over and over, he wrenched violently at his pinioned arms, he twisted his powerful young body from Señor Johnson's grasp again and again. But it was no use. In less than a minute he was bound hard and fast. Button promptly slackened the rope. The dust settled. The noise of the combat died. Again could be heard this single desert bird singing against the dawn.

CHAPTER TWELVE

IN THE ARROYO

SEÑOR JOHNSON quietly approached Estrella. The girl had, during the struggle, gone through an aimless but frantic exhibition of terror. Now she shrank back, her eyes staring wildly, her hands behind her, ready to flop again over the brink of hysteria.

"What are you going to do?" she demanded, her voice unnatural.

She received no reply. The man reached out and took her by the arm.

And then at once, as though the personal contact of the touch had broken through the last crumb of numbness with which shock had overlaid Buck Johnson's passions, the insanity of his rage broke out. He twisted her violently on her face, knelt on her back, and, with the short piece of hard rope the cowboy always carries to "hog-tie" cattle, he lashed her wrists together. Then he arose panting, his square black beard rising and falling with the rise and fall of his great chest.

Estrella had screamed again and again until her face had been fairly ground into the alkali. There she had choked and strangled and gasped and sobbed, her mind nearly unhinged with terror. She kept appealing to him in a hoarse voice, but could get no reply, no indication that he had even heard. This terrified her still more. Brent Palmer cursed steadily and accurately, but the man did not seem to hear him either.

The tempest had broken in Buck Johnson's soul. When he had touched Estrella he had, for the first time, realized what he had lost. It was not the woman—her he despised. But the dreams! All at once he knew what they had been to him—he understood how completely the very substance of his life had changed in response to their slow soul-action. The new world had been blasted—the old no longer existed to which to return.

Buck Johnson stared at this catastrophe until his sight blurred. Why, it was atrocious! He had done nothing to deserve it! Why had they not left him peaceful in his own life of cattle and the trail? He had been happy. His dull eyes fell on the causes of the ruin.

And then, finally, in the understanding of how he had been tricked of his life, his happiness, his right to well-being, the whole force of the man's anger flared. Brent Palmer lay there cursing him artistically. That man had done it; that man was in his power. He would get even. How?

Estrella, too, lay huddled, helpless and defenceless, at his feet. She had done it. He would get even. How?

He had spoken no word. He spoke none now, either in answer to Estrella's appeals, becoming piteous in their craving for relief from suspense, or in response to Brent Palmer's steady stream of insults and vituperations. Such things were far below. The bitterness and anger and desolation were squeezing his heart. He remembered the silly little row of potatoes sewn in the green hide lying along the top of the adobe fence, some fresh and round, some dripping as the rawhide contracted, some black and withered and very small. A fierce and savage light sprang into his eyes.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE RAWHIDE

First of all he unhitched the horses from the buckboard and turned them loose. Then, since he was early trained in Indian warfare, he dragged Palmer to the wagon wheel, and tied him so closely to it that he could not roll over. For, though the bronco-buster was already so fettered that his only possible movement was of the jackknife variety, nevertheless he might be able to hitch himself along the ground to a sharp stone, there to saw through the rope about his wrists. Estrella, her husband held in contempt. He merely supplemented her wrist bands by one about the ankles.

Leisurely he mounted Button and turned up the wagon trail, leaving the two. Estrella had exhausted herself. She was capable of nothing more in the way of emotion. Her eyes tight closed, she inhaled in deep, trembling, long-drawn breaths, and exhaled with the name of her Maker.

Brent Palmer, on the contrary, was by no means subdued. He had expected to be shot in cold blood. Now he did not know what to anticipate. His black, level brows drawn straight in defiance, he threw his curses after Johnson's retreating figure.

The latter, however, paid no attention. He had his purposes. Once at the top of the arroyo he took a careful survey of the landscape, now rich with dawn. Each excrescence on the plain his half-squinted eyes noticed, and with instant skill relegated to its proper category of soap-weed, mesquite, cactus. At length he swung Button in an easy lope toward what looked to be a bunch of soap-weed in the middle distance.

But in a moment the cattle could be seen plainly. Button pricked up his ears. He knew cattle. Now he proceeded tentatively, lifting high his little hoofs to avoid the half-seen inequalities of the ground and the ground's growths, wondering whether he were to be called on to rope or to drive. When the rider had approached to within a hundred feet, the cattle started. Immediately Button understood that he was to pursue. No rope swung above his head, so he sheered off and ran as fast as he could to cut ahead of the bunch. But his rider with knee and rein forced him in. After a moment, to his astonishment, he found himself running alongside a big steer. Button had never hunted buffalo—Buck Johnson had.

The Colt's forty-five barked once, and then again. The steer staggered, fell to his knees, recovered, and finally stopped, the blood streaming from his nostrils. In a moment he fell heavily on his side—dead.

Señor Johnson at once dismounted and began methodically to skin the animal. This was not easy, for he had no way of suspending the carcass nor of rolling it from side to side. However, he was practised at it and did a neat job. Two or three times he even caught himself taking extra pains that the thin flesh strips should not adhere to the inside of the pelt. Then he smiled grimly, and ripped it loose.

After the hide had been removed he cut from the edge, around and around, a long, narrow strip. With this he bound the whole into a compact bundle, strapped it on behind his saddle, and remounted. He returned to the arroyo.

Estrella still lay with her eyes closed. Brent Palmer looked up keenly. The bronco-buster saw the green hide. A puzzled expression crept across his face.

Roughly Johnson loosed his enemy from the wheel and dragged him to the woman. He passed the free end of the riata about them both, tying them close together. The girl continued to moan, out of her wits with terror.

"What are you going to do now, you devil?" demanded Palmer, but received no reply.

Buck Johnson spread out the rawhide. Putting forth his huge strength, he carried to it the pair, bound together like a bale of goods, and laid them on its cool surface. He threw across them the edges, and then deliberately began to wind around and around the huge and unwieldy rawhide package the strip he had cut from the edge of the pelt.

Nor was this altogether easy. At last Brent Palmer understood. He writhed in the struggle of desperation, foaming blasphemies. The uncouth bundle rolled here and there. But inexorably the other, from the advantage of his position, drew the thongs tighter.

And then, all at once, from vituperation the bronco-buster fell to pleading, not for life, but for death.

"For God's sake, shoot me!" he cried, from within the smothering folds of the rawhide. "If you ever had a heart in you, shoot me! Don't leave me here to be crushed in this vise. You wouldn't do that to a yellow dog. An Injin wouldn't do that, Buck. It's a joke, isn't it? Don't go away an' leave me, Buck. I've done you dirt. Cut my heart out, if you want to; I won't say a word, but don't leave me here for the sun——"

His voice was drowned in a piercing scream, as Estrella came to herself and understood. Always the rawhide had possessed for her an occult fascination and repulsion. She had never been able to touch it without a shudder, and yet she had always been drawn to experiment with it. The terror of her doom had now added to it for her all the vague and premonitory terrors which heretofore she had not understood.

The richness of the dawn had flowed to the west. Day was at hand. Breezes had begun to play across the desert; the wind devils to raise their straight columns. A first long shaft of sunlight shot through the pass in the Chiricahuas, trembled in the dust-moted air, and laid its warmth on the rawhide. Señor Johnson roused himself from his gloom to speak his first words of the episode.

"There, damn you!" said he. "I guess you'll be close enough together now!"

He turned away to look for his horse.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE DESERT

Button was a trusty of Señor Johnson's private animals. He was never known to leave his master in the lurch, and so was habitually allowed certain privileges. Now, instead of remaining exactly on the spot where he was "tied to the ground," he had wandered out of the dry arroyo bed to the upper level of the plains, where he knew certain bunch grasses might be found. Buck Johnson climbed the steep wooded bank in search of him.

The pony stood not ten feet distant. At his master's abrupt appearance he merely raised his head, a wisp of grass in the corner of his mouth, without attempting to move away. Buck Johnson walked confidently to him, fumbling in his side pocket for the piece of sugar with which he habitually soothed Button's sophisticated palate. His hand encountered Estrella's letter. He drew it out and opened it.

"Dear Buck," it read, "I am going away. I tried to be good, but I can't. It's too lonesome for me. I'm afraid of the horses and the cattle and the men and the desert. I hate it all. I tried to make you see how I felt about it, but you couldn't seem to see. I know you'll never forgive me, but I'd go crazy here. I'm almost crazy now. I suppose you think I'm a bad woman, but I am not. You won't believe that. It's true though. The desert would make anyone bad. I don't see how you stand it. You've been good to me, and I've really tried, but it's no use. The country is awful. I never ought to have come. I'm sorry you are going to think me a bad woman, for I like you and admire you, but nothing, *nothing* could make me stay here any longer." She signed herself simply Estrella Sands, her maiden name.

Buck Johnson stood staring at the paper for a much longer time than was necessary merely to absorb the meaning of the words. His senses, sharpened by the stress of the last sixteen hours, were trying mightily to cut to the mystery of a change going on within himself. The phrases of the letter were bald enough, yet they conveyed something vital to his inner being. He could not understand what it was.

Then abruptly he raised his eyes.

Before him lay the desert, but a desert suddenly and miraculously changed, a desert he had never seen before. Mile after mile it swept away before him, hot, dry, suffocating, lifeless. The sparse vegetation was grey with the alkali dust. The heat hung choking in the air like a curtain. Lizards sprawled in the sun, repulsive. A rattlesnake dragged its loathsome length from under a mesquite. The dried carcass of a steer, whose parchment skin drew tight across its bones, rattled in the breeze. Here and there rock ridges showed with the obscenity of so many skeletons, exposing to the hard, cruel sky the earth's nakedness. Thirst, delirium, death, hovered palpable in the wind; dreadful, unconquerable, ghastly.

The desert showed her teeth and lay in wait like a fierce beast. The little soul of man shrank in terror before it.

Buck Johnson stared, recalling the phrases of the letter, recalling the words of his foreman, Jed Parker. "It's too lonesome for me," "I'm afraid," "I hate it all," "I'd go crazy here," "The desert would make anyone bad," "The country is awful." And the musing voice of the old cattleman, "I wonder if she'll like the country!" They reiterated themselves over and over; and always as refrained his own confident reply, "Like the country? Sure! Why *shouldn't* she?"

And then he recalled the summer just passing, and the woman who had made no fuss. Chance remarks of hers came back to him, remarks whose meaning he had not at the time grasped, but which now he saw were desperate appeals to his understanding. He had known his desert. He had never known hers.

With an exclamation Buck Johnson turned abruptly back to the arroyo. Button followed him, mildly curious, certain that his master's reappearance meant a summons for himself.

Down the miniature cliff the man slid, confidently, without hesitation, sure of himself. His shoulders held squarely, his step elastic, his eye bright, he walked to the fearful, shapeless bundle now lying motionless on the flat surface of the alkali.

Brent Palmer had fallen into a grim silence, but Estrella still moaned. The cattleman drew his knife and ripped loose the bonds. Immediately the flaps of the wet rawhide fell apart, exposing to the new daylight the two bound together. Buck Johnson leaned over to touch the woman's shoulder.

"Estrella," said he gently.

Her eyes came open with a snap, and stared into his, wild with the surprise of his return.

"Estrella," he repeated, "how old are you?"

She gulped down a sob, unable to comprehend the purport of his question.

"How old are you, Estrella?" he repeated again.

"Twenty-one," she gasped finally.

"Ah!" said he.

He stood for a moment in deep thought, then began methodically, without haste, to cut loose the thongs that bound the two together.

When the man and the woman were quite freed, he stood for a moment, the knife in his hand, looking down on them. Then he swung himself into the saddle and rode away, straight down the narrow arroyo, out beyond its lower widening, into the vast plains the hither side of the Chiricahuas. The alkali dust was snatched by the wind from beneath his horse's feet. Smaller and smaller he dwindled, rising and falling, rising and falling in the monotonous cow pony's lope. The heat shimmer veiled him for a moment, but he reappeared. A mirage concealed him, but he emerged on the other side of it. Then suddenly he was gone. The desert had swallowed him up.

Toleration—or Persecution

By LAURENCE STERNE

I WAS speaking of these things one day to Voltaire, and he wished me joy of the great happiness and advantages of living in a country where such expressions and allusions, which ignorance or malice might be capable of construing into treason or blasphemy against Church or State. could escape the inquisition or bastille.

He then put into my hand his treatise on *Toleration*, which had been but just published. It is written, like all his works, with great spirit, wit and learning, to prove, what no fool could ever yet dispute, that persecution, *for God's sake*, is a most wicked thing, and contrary to Reason, Nature, and Scripture.

It appears an extraordinary thing to me that since there is such a diabolical spirit in the depravity of human nature, as persecution for difference of opinion in religious tenets, there never happened to be any *inquisition*, any *auto da fé*, any *crusade*, among the Pagans.

That during the ages of ignorance and barbarity, while the devil, as divines tell us, governed the Church, equivocated in their oracles, ordained impurities, and commanded human sacrifices, brethren were not set against brethren, nor nation against nation, in *civil fury* or in *pious war*.

But that, as soon as it had pleased God, by miraculous interposition, to take the Church into his own hands, so shocking and impious an era should thence commence—that the word of peace should call forth the sword, and the precepts of love and concord produce hatred and dissension

The Christian—say *un*Christian—priest informs me, the reason of this remarkable difference was that the heathens happened to have no one article of belief worth the quarreling about—as they universally supposed the soul to perish with the body. *Post mortem nihil est*, was their creed. And that even those few, among the philosophers, who admitted of a post-existence, at the same time denied a hell. *There is not one*, says Cicero, *so stupid as to believe it.*

Thus, then, while the whole of human existence was ignorantly supposed to have been comprehended within the pale of mortal life, peace, friendship and good-will were, most certainly, preferable to war, enmity and persecution.

But when the immortal soul was once put under the care of Christ's Vicar here on earth—how totally unworthy to be styled priests of the lamb, and oracles of the dove, must those divines be, who would not cast the body of a heretic into the flames!

I cannot help differing from the orthodoxy of this tenet; and am more inclined to agree with Cicero, in the passage above quoted, though he was but groping in the dark himself.

For to believe a soul, and to damn it, methinks is not light:—But lightning.

The Bluebird

By JOHN BURROUGHS

John Burroughs

WHEN Nature made the bluebird she wished to propitiate both the sky and the earth, so she gave him the color of the one on his back and the hue of the other on his breast, and ordained that his appearance in spring should denote that the strife and war between these two elements was at an end. He is the peace-harbinger; in him the celestial and terrestrial strike hands and are fast friends. He means the furrow and he means the warmth; he means all the soft, wooing influences of the spring on the one hand, and the retreating footsteps of winter on the other.

It is sure to be a bright March morning when you first hear his note; and it is as if the milder influences up above had found a voice and let a word fall upon your ear, so tender is it and so prophetic, a hope tinged with a regret.

"*Bermuda! Bermuda! Bermuda!*" he seems to say, as if both invoking and lamenting, and behold! Bermuda follows close, though the little pilgrim may be only repeating the tradition of his race, himself having come only from Florida, the Carolinas, or even from Virginia, where he has found his Bermuda on some broad sunny hill-side thickly studded with cedars and persimmon trees.

In New York and in New England the sap starts up in the sugar-maple the very day the bluebird arrives, and sugar-making begins forthwith. The bird is generally a mere disembodied voice; a rumour in the air for two or three days before it takes visible shape before you. The males are the pioneers, and come several days in advance of the females. By the time both are here and the pair have begun to prospect for a place to nest, sugar-making is over, the last vestige of snow has disappeared, and the plow is brightening its mould-board in the new furrow.

The bluebird enjoys the preëminence of being the first bit of colour that cheers our northern landscape. The other birds that arrive about the same time—the sparrow, the robin, the phœbe-bird—are clad in neutral tints, grey, brown, or russet; but the bluebird brings one of the primary hues and the divinest of them all.

This bird also has the distinction of answering very nearly to the robin redbreast of English memory, and was by the early settlers of New England christened the blue-robin.

It is a size or two larger, and the ruddy hue of its breast does not verge so nearly on an orange, but the manners and habits of the two birds are very much alike. Our bird has the softer voice, but the English redbreast is much the more skilled musician. He has indeed a fine, animated warble, heard nearly the year through about English gardens and along the old hedge-rows, that is quite beyond the compass of our bird's instrument. On the other hand, our bird is associated with the spring as the British species cannot be, being a winter resident also, while the brighter sun and sky of the New World has given him a coat that far surpasses that of his transatlantic cousin.

It is worthy of remark that among British birds there is no *blue*-bird. The cerulean tint seems much rarer among the feathered tribes there than here. On this continent there are at least three species of the common bluebird, while in all our woods there is the blue jay and the indigo-bird,—the latter so intensely blue as to fully justify its name. There is also the blue grosbeak, not much behind the indigo-bird in intensity of colour; and among our warblers the blue tint is very common.

It is interesting to know that the bluebird is not confined to any one section of the country; and that when one goes west he will still have this favourite with him, though a little changed in voice and colour, just enough to give variety without marring the identity.

The western bluebird is considered a distinct species, and is perhaps a little more brilliant and showy than its Eastern brother; and Nuttall thinks its song is more varied, sweet, and tender. Its colour approaches to ultramarine, while it has a sash of chestnut-red across its shoulders,—all the effects, I expect, of that wonderful air and sky of California, and of those great western plains; or if one goes a little higher up into the mountainous regions of the West he finds the Arctic bluebird, the ruddy brown on the breast changed to greenish-blue, and the wings longer and more pointed; in other respects not differing much from our species.

The bluebird usually builds its nest in a hole in a stump or stub, or in an old cavity excavated by a woodpecker, when such can be had; but its first impulse seems to be to start in the world in much more style, and the happy pair make a great show of house-hunting about the farm-buildings, now half persuaded to appropriate a dove-cot, then discussing in a lively manner a last year's swallow's nest, or proclaiming with much flourish and flutter that they have taken the wren's house, or the tenement of the purple martin; till finally nature becomes too urgent, when all this pretty make-believe ceases, and most of them settle back upon the old family stumps and knotholes in remote fields, and go to work in earnest.

In such situations the female is easily captured by approaching very stealthily and covering the entrance to the nest. The bird seldom makes any effort to escape, seeing how hopeless the case is, and keeps her place on the nest till she feels your hand closing around her. I have looked down into the cavity and seen the poor thing palpitating with fear and looking up with distended eyes, but never moving till I had withdrawn a few paces; then she rushes out with a cry that brings the male on the scene in a hurry. He warbles and lifts his wings beseechingly, but shows no anger or disposition to scold and complain like most birds. Indeed, this bird seems incapable of uttering a harsh note, or of doing a spiteful, ill-tempered thing.

The ground-builders all have some art or device to decoy one away from the nest, affecting lameness, a crippled wing, or a broken back, promising an easy capture if pursued. The tree-builders depend upon concealing the nest or placing it beyond reach. But the bluebird has no art either way, and its nest is easily found.

About the only enemies the sitting bird or the nest is in danger of, are snakes and squirrels. I knew of a farm-boy who was in the habit of putting his hand down into a bluebird's nest and taking out the old bird whenever he came that way. One day he put his hand in, and feeling something peculiar, withdrew it hastily, when it was instantly followed by the head and neck of an enormous black snake. The boy took to his heels and the snake gave chase, pressing him close till a plowman near by came to the rescue with his ox-whip.

There never was a happier or more devoted husband than the male bluebird is. But among nearly all our familiar birds the serious cares of life seem to devolve almost entirely upon the female. The male is hilarious and demonstrative, the female serious and anxious about her charge. The male is the attendant of the female, following her wherever she goes. He never leads, never directs, but only seconds and applauds. If his life is all poetry and romance, hers is all business and prose. She has no pleasure but her duty, and no duty but to look after her nest and brood. She shows no affection for the male, no pleasure in his society; she only tolerates him as a necessary evil, and, if he is killed, goes in quest of another in the most business-like manner, as you would go for the plumber or the glazier. In most cases the male is the ornamental partner in the firm, and contributes little of the working capital. There seems to be more equality of the sexes among the woodpeckers, wrens, and swallows; while the contrast is greatest, perhaps, in the bobolink family, where the courting is done in the Arab fashion, the female fleeing with all her speed and the male pursuing with equal precipitation; and were it not for the broods of young birds that appear, it would be hard to believe that the intercourse ever ripened into anything more intimate.

With the bluebirds the male is useful as well as ornamental. He is the gay champion and escort of the female at all times, and while she is sitting he feeds her regularly. It is very pretty to watch them building their nest. The male is very active in hunting out a place and exploring the boxes and cavities, but seems to have no choice in the matter and is anxious only to please and encourage his mate, who has the practical turn and knows what will do and what will not. After she has suited herself he applauds her immensely, and away the two go in quest of material for the nest, the male acting as guard and flying above and in advance of the female. She brings all the material and does all the work of building, he looking on and encouraging her with gesture and song. He acts also as inspector of her work, but I fear is a very partial one. She enters the nest with her bit of dry grass or straw, and having adjusted it to her notion, withdraws and waits near by while he goes in and looks it over. On coming out he exclaims very plainly, "*Excellent! excellent!*" and away the two go again for more material.

The bluebirds, when they build about the farm-buildings, sometimes come in conflict with the swallows. The past season I knew a pair to take forcible possession of the domicile of a pair of the latter—the cliff species that now stick their nests under the eaves of the barn. The bluebirds had been broken up in a little bird-house near by, by the rats or perhaps a weasel, and being no doubt in a bad humor, and the season being well advanced, they made forcible entrance into the adobe tenement of their neighbours, and held possession of it for some days, but I believe finally withdrew, rather than live amid such a squeaky, noisy colony. I have heard that these swallows, when ejected from their homes in that way by the phœbe-bird, have been known to fall to and mason up the entrance to the nest while their enemy was inside of it, thus having a revenge as complete and cruel as anything in human annals.

The bluebirds and the house-wrens more frequently come into collision. A few years ago I put up a little bird-house in the back end of my garden for the accommodation of the wrens, and every season a pair have taken up their abode there. One spring a pair of bluebirds looked into the tenement and lingered about several days, leading me to hope that they would conclude to occupy it. But they finally went away, and later in the season the wrens appeared, and after a little coqueting, were regularly installed in their old quarters and were as happy as only wrens can be.

One of our younger poets, Myron Benton, saw a little bird

> "Ruffled with whirlwind of his ecstasies,"

which must have been the wren, as I know of no other bird that so throbs and palpitates with music as this little vagabond. And the pair I speak of seemed exceptionally happy, and the male had a small tornado of song in his crop that kept him "ruffled" every moment in the day. But before their honeymoon was over the bluebirds returned. I knew something was wrong before I was up in the morning. Instead of that voluble and gushing song outside the window, I heard the wrens scolding and crying at a fearful rate, and on going out saw the bluebirds in possession of the box. The poor wrens were in despair; they wrung their hands and tore their hair, after the wren fashion, but chiefly did they rattle out their disgust and wrath at the intruders. I have no doubt that if it could have been interpreted it would have proven the rankest and most voluble Billingsgate ever uttered. For the wren is saucy, and he has a tongue in his head that can outwag any other tongue known to me.

The bluebirds said nothing, but the male kept an eye on Mr. Wren; and when he came too near, gave chase, driving him to cover under the fence, or under a rubbish-heap or other object, where the wren would scold and rattle away, while his pursuer sat on the fence or the pea-brush waiting for him to reappear.

Days passed, and the usurpers prospered and the outcasts were wretched; but the latter lingered about, watching and abusing their enemies, and hoping, no doubt, that things would take a turn, as they presently did. The outraged wrens were fully avenged. The mother bluebird had laid her full complement of eggs and was beginning to set, when one day, as her mate was perched above her on the barn, along came a boy with one of those wicked elastic slings and cut him down with a pebble. There he lay like a bit of sky fallen upon the grass. The widowed bird seemed to understand what had happened, and without much ado disappeared next day in quest of another mate. How she contrived to make her wants known without trumpeting them about I am unable to say. But I presume the birds have a way of advertising that answers the purpose well. Maybe she trusted to luck to fall in with some stray bachelor or bereaved male, who would undertake to console a widow of one day's standing. I will say, in passing, that there are no bachelors from choice among the birds; they are all rejected suitors, while old maids are entirely unknown. There is a Jack to every Jill; and some to boot.

The males being more exposed by their song and plumage, and by being the pioneers in migrating, seem to be slightly in excess lest the supply fall short, and hence it sometimes happens that a few are bachelors perforce; there are not females enough to go around, but before the season is over there are sure to be some vacancies in the marital ranks, which they are called on to fill.

In the meantime the wrens were beside themselves with delight; they fairly screamed with joy. If the male was before "ruffled with whirlwind of his ecstasies," he was now in danger of being rent asunder. He inflated his throat and caroled as wren never caroled before. And the female, too, how she cackled and darted about! How busy they both were! Rushing into the nest, they hustled those eggs out in less than a minute, wren time. They carried in new material, and by the third day were fairly installed again in their old quarters; but on the third day, so rapidly are these little dramas played, the female bluebird reappeared with another mate. Ah! how the wren stock went down then! What dismay and despair filled again those little breasts! It was pitiful. They did not scold as before, but after a day or two withdrew from the garden, dumb with grief, and gave up the struggle.

The bluebird, finding her eggs gone and her nest changed, seemed suddenly seized with alarm and shunned the box; or else, finding she had less need for another husband than she thought, repented her rashness and wanted to dissolve the compact. But the happy bridegroom would not take the hint, and exerted all his eloquence to comfort and reassure her. He was fresh and fond, and until his bereaved female found him I am sure his suit had not prospered that season. He thought the box just the thing, and that there was no need of alarm, and spent days in trying to persuade the female back. Seeing he could not be a step-father to a family, he was quite willing to assume a nearer relation. He hovered about the box, he went in and out, he called, he warbled, he entreated; the female would respond occasionally and come and alight near, and even peep into the nest, but would not enter it, and quickly flew away again. Her mate would reluctantly follow, but he was soon back, uttering the most confident and cheering calls. If she did not come he would perch above the nest and sound his loudest notes over and over again, looking in the direction of his mate and beckoning with every motion. But she responded less and less frequently. Some days I would see him only, but finally he gave it up; the pair disappeared, and the box remained deserted the rest of the summer.

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FOUR ducks on a pond,
    A grass-bank beyond,
A blue sky of spring,
White clouds on the wing;
What a little thing
To remember for years—
To remember with tears!

William Allingham.

Books that May Last a Century

By HEYWOOD BROUN

Heywood Broun

AT THE first sound of it, the question as to what books ought to become classics had the ring of requiring an answer that would require prophecy. And I dislike prophecy. First of all I live in my own country and so am without honour in that respect, and besides it requires so much checking up. But as I look at it again the question is not so forbidding. Certainly some of the books written now will live for one hundred years. And I like to think that some of the books that survive will be the ones that I like. Anyway I'll never know how far off I've been.

What will they be interested in, anyway, a hundred years from now? Perhaps civilization will have changed so that any interest in our literature will be but academic. It is not too much to imagine that human emotions then will be under better control and there will not be the necessity for the release found in reading. The students of that day will doubtless dig around and compile charts. And those charts will show curves which will prove something. I haven't decided just what. Certainly the stuff that will be of interest to the student a century hence will be the literature that came to grips with life. Out of that stuff they could get some record of man in his effort upward. And as I see it, those curves will be jagged affairs, making an upward thrust now and then, not moving to their conclusion by any orderly tempo or steady rise.

Perhaps "The Mind in the Making," by James Harvey Robinson, will be called old stuff by the rising generation of 2025. But I like to think that it will occupy a point on the chart if only to show at what stage of the game man began to take his engine apart to see why it ran. Up to that point there had been some cleaning of spark plugs, an occasional dusting of a fender, but no such clear effort to get at the laws and functions of the machine. Here we have a pedagogue on a holiday who might have said to himself, "I'm going to tell the truth once if it ruins me."

Somewhere along near that locality might appear a point for James' "Pragmatism." We don't hear so much about it now, but I wouldn't be surprised if future savants hooked it up in some way with a lot of things, such as Trotsky, Lenin and so on. And the other James boy certainly should have a mention. "The Ambassadors," say, will mark for the future seeker one of the high spots of the Puritan civilization coming to spiritual conflict with the ideas of the old world. We of this era haven't enough patience to loiter along with Henry James. But we shouldn't pass him off so easily. He had a way of putting his characters together so that they had minds as well as faces and clothes. It wouldn't surprise me at all if Strether and Chad or some of the others were still walking around a hundred years from now.

If we go back that far to admit the brothers James, we can't leave out "The Way of All Flesh." Butler's beautiful treatise on the way of the world will be one of the jagged peaks in that curve. Or so it seems to me.

The trouble with this kind of an opinion is that it calls for an orientation and analysis that we don't ordinarily go in for. Books that we enjoy may make their appeal to some emotional factor that is a personal thing. And because we have enjoyed some of them so much we may overvalue them. Or we may do the reverse and leave some of them out. "Jean Christophe," I suppose, will be in any list. I don't recall offhand any book since "Les Misérables" that has such scope or rather covers such a span. It surely must live for a long time if men's emotions keep on responding to the same sort of appeals. It has the added strength of glamour. They will be sentimental then, I suppose, and still thrill to the epic of the singer and the unlistening world.

If they won't want to carry so much around with them in the year 2025, and my guess is that they won't, "Of Human Bondage" might serve them as well as "Jean Christophe." It has much the same power. Certainly it deserves to live for the truth it brings to bear on the relations of the sexes. And as we've no promise that such matters will be settled satisfactorily in a hundred years, Maugham's moving account may interest readers then. His "Moon and Sixpence" may interest them, though I am not so sure. It is a sort of scratch job compared to the longer work and somehow has the air of a stunt. Still it may mark a break in the curve; and aspirants for their degrees at the Duke, Eastman, Arrow Collar, Ford or Lee Shubert Universities of the next century will doubtless write theses on how many good bond salesmen and greengrocers were spoiled by reading "The Moon and Sixpence."

Something of Wells' will survive in addition to his "Outline of History." I hope it is Mr. Polly, though it might well be "The Research Magnificent" or "The Wonderful Visit." And Arnold Bennett should be there with "The Old Wives' Tale." You see, the subject is endless and if given time, and permission to stretch the limits still further, something should be said about Tolstoy. And I haven't even mentioned Shaw. He would want to do his own picking anyway, and it is just as well, as I would probably flounder around and choose "Saint Joan."

But just one more word, please. The collected works of Edna St. Vincent Millay will be there, I am sure. Or if they are not I will see to it that my heirs withdraw the funds set aside for Broun University. But I need hardly worry about that. Over the gates to the school will be the verses about my candle that burns at both ends. And no one will be admitted to that school anyway that hasn't first memorized "Renascence" or "The Poet and His Book." But outside the influence of that particular school they will know about Edna St. Vincent Millay and her songs. It can't be otherwise. Anything so beautiful and perfect must live. If the next century doesn't think that way about it—well, I haven't any further interest in the next century.

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The more you know, the less sure you are. Voltaire.

Learning has gained most by those books which the printers have lost.
Thomas Fuller.

Literature is the great morgue where all seek the dead ones whom they love, or to whom they are related. Heinrich Heine.

Most people become bankrupt through having invested too heavily in the prose of life. To have ruined oneself over poetry is an honor. Oscar Wilde.

Look twice, if what you want is a just conception; look once, if what you want is a sense of beauty. Amiel.

Books That I Hope May Last a Century

By JOHN COTTON DANA

JCDana

FEW modern novels are so poor that I can't read them. Those I can't read are mostly those which critics hail with delight and call genuine contributions. Some of the best of the Victorian stuff which these same critics condemn, often I fear without reading, pleased my simple-minded youth forty-odd years ago. Thereafter, for a decade or two, I was superior to fiction of any kind; being busied with everything else in print, to the end that I might wisely guide the reading of the addicts of the public library which I conducted.

To go a little further with the story of my literary life: I have, in these later days, read all the new novels I could reach, except, as hinted already, those which our critics said were the best of the year, or of the Twentieth Century, or of all time, as their enthusiasm suggested.

It is now plain enough that I am not fit to name a few novels that will live, and name them right. But on special request I name two or three stories that I would be pleased to be told will live for a century or so. I begin with a book which the author, Samuel Merwin, calls "In Red and Gold." It would grieve the critics, if they cared for my opinion, to know that this story has a purpose. These critics have accepted the theory that a good novelist writes as a kodak takes a picture, without being in the picture itself; part of this theory being the statement that a writer can tell a story that is not spun out of his own mind-stuff. I hope it is clear that I discarded those theories about 1890.

Merwin's book is an adventurous tale, not unadorned with love; and I like it as a tale quite well. Into it Merwin has put some of the most sympathetic discussion of China that I know of; and has so coated it with pretty good melodrama as to make his teachings easily read and deftly moving for the reader. The world will some day wake to the fact that if the U. S. A. had learned something about China in the early Twentieth Century, the woes of the early part of the Twenty-first Century would have been ameliorated, if not missed entirely.

I am one of the five million and odd who read the *Saturday Evening Post*. To some of those who say to me that a librarian should be above such a journal, I make the plea that if one would guide wisely the reading done by his patrons he must know what it is that draws so many to this amazing weekly. But I say that merely to pacify the critics; the truth, of course, being that I read it because I like to. I have brought the *Post* into this tale that I may mention a recent story in it for which I wish the same centennial immortality I have suggested for "Red and Gold." The title is "The Proud Old Name." It is short, but long enough to be called a novel if bound in boards; is composed of Spanish aristocracy, half-breed peons and Americans; has moving accidents; speaks briefly of love; and is by me chiefly admired for its presentation of the hardships which time and circumstance have set about the growth of civility in a country next to ours. The author's name is C. E. Scoggins. Of him the reader of this may think what he pleases with no protest from me, for I know nothing about him.

Two novels are as far as I dare to go with my list of books I would be pleased to know will live long. But I must add a writer's name with no mention of titles; because he writes what seem to me quite the best pictures of New England life of the many I have read; and because his tales are set in a village much like the one I have known intimately for more than half a century. His name is Ben Ames Williams. He makes Maine Yankees live in his books precisely as they do in fact; but adds that which makes his pictures not kodaks, but scenes drawn by an artist.

In the years when, as I have said, I was not reading novels and was reading everything in print for professional purposes, I fell upon many articles by Prince Peter Kropotkin. When he put out, in 1902, his book called "Mutual Aid," it drew me, of course. I was then as now quite creedless, and was looking for good reasons why man born of a relentless nature should seem to be so inevitably quite decent on the whole. "Mutual Aid" set forth the reasons. In it he nowhere says what Stevenson said, "We are condemned to some nobility"; but he arrives at the identical conclusions which Stevenson's words sum up so well. Of all books on man that I have known it is easily the most cheering to those who are not anchored, but sail the open sea.

As a promoter of libraries, and so of reading, it is my duty to let go by no chance to advertise aids to good reading; and still more surely is it my duty to speak kind words when I can of helpful things librarians have done. A national organization of librarians, now several thousand strong, has published many lists of carefully selected books. I name only one. It will live a hundred years; but not in its present form. It is a list—called, alas! a Catalog—of four thousand of the books published in English between 1912 and 1921 which my associates think are the best for reading by the folk of the U. S. A. With the name of each book goes a note of explanation, which is usually not so much a summary as an estimate or valuation. On my word as a library man it is a good book. In due course it will be merged, as to its best items, in a larger volume covering a wide range of years; but will not altogether perish.

To His Valet

By PIERRE DE RONSARD

I WANT three days with Homer's Iliad now,
  So, Corydon, keep this door closed on me:
If anything disturbs my peace, I vow
You'll learn how heavy my right hand can be.
  I do not even wish the maid to come
To make my bed, neither your mate, nor you,
I wish to be a recluse three days through,
Then for a whole week we'll be frolicsome.
  But if Cassandra should send anyone,
Open to him at once, and quickly run
And call me from my room, lest he should wait.
  I'll see no one but him at any rate:
Should some God choose me to descend upon,
Shut the door tight and leave him at the gate.

Monsieur Lecoq

The Master Detective Makes His Debut

By ÉMILE GABORIAU

Em. Gaboriau

CHAPTER XVII

TO EXTORT a confession from a man interested in preserving silence and persuaded that no proofs can be produced against him, is certainly a difficult task; but to demand the truth from a *woman,* under similar circumstances, is, as they say at the Palais de Justice, "attempting to make the devil confess."

After all, what had been gained by this examination, which had been conducted with the greatest possible care by a judge who knew how to manage his questions as well as a skilful general knows how to manœuvre his troops and place them in the best possible positions?

They had discovered unexceptionable proof of the Widow Chupin's connivance with the murderer, and nothing more.

"That old hag knows all," murmured Lecoq.

"Yes," replied the judge, "it is almost certain that she knew the people who came to her house—the women, the victims, the murderer—all of them, in fact; but it is certain that she knew this Gustave—I read it in her eyes. I am also convinced that she knows this Lacheneur—this man upon whom the dying soldier breathed vengeance—this mysterious personage who evidently possesses the key to the enigma. This man must be found."

"Ah! I will find him if I have to question each of the eleven hundred thousand men who walk the streets of Paris!"

This was promising so much that the judge, in spite of his preoccupation, could not repress a smile.

"If this old woman would only decide to make a clean breast of it at her next examination!" remarked Lecoq.

"Yes. But she will never speak."

The detective shook his head despondingly. Such was his own opinion. He did not delude himself with false hopes, and he had noticed between the Widow Chupin's eyebrows, those furrows which betray the senseless obstinacy of the brute.

"Women never confess," resumed the judge; "and when they seem to resign themselves to making a revelation, it is only because they hope they have found a way to mislead the examiner. Evidence will crush the most obstinate man; he ceases to struggle; he makes a confession. A woman scoffs at evidence. Show her the sun, and she will close her eyes and reply: 'It is night.' Men plan and combine different systems of defence according to the social position in which they were born. Women have but one system, whatever their condition in life. They deny everything, and always; and they weep. When I push the Chupin with disagreeable questions, on her next examination, rest assured she will turn her eyes into a fountain of tears."

In his impatience, he angrily stamped his foot. He had many weapons in his arsenal; but he could find no weapon powerful enough to break a woman's dogged resistance.

"If I only understood the motive that guides this old hag!" he continued. "But not a clew! Who can tell me what powerful interest commands her to be silent? Is it her own cause that she is defending? Is she an accomplice? Who will prove to us that she did not aid the murderer in planning an ambuscade?"

"Yes," responded Lecoq, slowly, "yes; this supposition very naturally presents itself to the mind. But think a moment; such a theory would prove that the premises which you admitted, Monsieur, a short time since were false. If the Widow Chupin is an accomplice, the murderer is not the person we have supposed him to be; he is simply the man whom he seems to be."

This argument was apparently convincing to M. Segmuller.

"What is your opinion?" he exclaimed.

The young detective had formed his opinion. But how could he, an humble policeman, venture to express an opinion when a judge hesitated?

He fully comprehended that his position necessitated extreme reserve on his part; and it was in the most modest tone possible that he said:

"Why might not the pretended drunkard have dazzled Mother Chupin's eyes with promises of a brilliant reward? Why might he not have promised her money, a large amount?"

He paused; the clerk had returned. Behind him was a soldier, who remained respectfully upon the threshold, his heels in a straight line, his right hand upon the visor of his shako, palm turned outward, the elbow on a level with his eye, in accordance with the ordinance.

"Monsieur," said the man, "the keeper of the prison sends me to inquire if he is to keep the Widow Chupin in solitary confinement; she complains bitterly on account of it."

M. Segmuller reflected for a moment.

"Certainly," he murmured, as if replying to an objection made by his own conscience; "certainly, it is a terrible aggravation of one's suffering; but if I allow this woman to associate with the other prisoners, she will certainly find some opportunity to communicate with parties outside. This must not be; the interests of justice and of truth must be considered first."

This last thought decided him.

"It is decided that the prisoner must be kept in solitary confinement until further orders."

The soldier allowed his right hand to fall at his side, carried his right foot three inches back of his left heel, wheeled around and departed.

When the door had closed on the soldier's retreating form, the smiling clerk drew a large envelope from his pocket, and handed it to the judge.

"Here is a communication from the keeper of the prison," he remarked.

The judge broke the seal, and read aloud:

"I feel compelled to counsel the judge to surround himself with every precaution before proceeding to the examination of the prisoner, May.

"Since his unsuccessful attempt at suicide, this prisoner has been in a state of excitement that has obliged us to confine him in a strait-jacket. He did not close his eyes during the night, and the guards who were watching him expected every moment to see him become insane. Still, he has not uttered a word.

"When food was offered him this morning, he rejected it with horror, and I should not be surprised if it were his intention to starve himself to death.

"I have rarely seen a more dangerous malefactor. I think him capable of almost any desperate act."

"Ah!" exclaimed the clerk, whose smile had disappeared, "if I were in the place of Monsieur le Juge, I would have the soldiers who brought him here come in with him."

"What! you—Goquet, you, an old clerk—make such a proposition! Can it be that you are afraid?"

"Afraid! No, certainly not; but——"

"Nonsense!" interrupted Lecoq, in a tone that betrayed his confidence in his great strength. "Am I not here?"

If M. Segmuller had seated himself at his desk, that article of furniture would have served as a rampart between the prisoner and himself. He usually occupied that seat; but after the fear evinced by his clerk, he would have blushed to avail himself of the slightest protection.

He therefore took a seat by the fireplace, as he had done a few moments before while questioning the Chupin, and ordered his door-keeper to admit the prisoner alone. He emphasized the word "alone."

A second after the door was flung open with terrible violence, and the murderer entered, or rather precipitated himself, into the room.

Goquet turned pale behind his table, and Lecoq advanced a step, ready to make a spring forward.

But when he reached the centre of the room, the prisoner paused and looked around him.

"Where is the judge?" he inquired, in a hoarse voice.

"I am the judge," replied M. Segmuller.

"No, the other."

"What other?"

"The one who came to question me last evening."

"He has met with an accident. Yesterday, after leaving you, he fell and broke his leg."

"Oh!"

"And I am to take his place."

But the prisoner was apparently deaf to the explanation. A stupor had suddenly succeeded his frenzied excitement. His features, which had been so distorted with rage, relaxed. He became livid; he tottered, as if about to fall.

"Compose yourself," said the judge, in a benevolent tone; "if you are too weak to remain standing, take a seat."

Already with a powerful effort, the man had recovered his self-possession. A flame, instantly suppressed, flashed from his eyes.

"Many thanks for your kindness," he replied, "but this is nothing. I felt a slight sensation of dizziness, but it is over now."

"Is it long since you have eaten anything?"

"I have eaten nothing since this man"—he pointed to Lecoq—"brought me some bread and wine in the station-house over there."

"Do you not feel the need of something?"

"No—and yet—if you would be so good—I would like a glass of water."

"Will you not have some wine with it?"

"I should prefer the pure water."

They brought him what he desired.

He drained the first glass at a single draught; the second he drank more slowly. One might have supposed that he was drinking in life itself. He seemed to have been born again.

CHAPTER XVIII

Eighteen out of every twenty criminals who appear before the judge are armed with a more or less complete plan of defence, which they have conceived and perfected in their solitary cells.

Innocent or guilty, they have adopted a *rôle* that commences the instant they cross the threshold of that dread room where the magistrate awaits them.

The moment of the prisoner's entrance is one in which the judge must bring all his powers of penetration into play.

The attitude of the man as surely betrays his plan of defence as an index-table reveals the contents of a book.

But in this case M. Segmuller did not think that appearances were deceitful. It was evident to him that the accused had not thought of feigning anything; and that the excited frenzy which marked his entrance was as real as his present stupor.

At least, all the danger of which the keeper had spoken was apparently over. The judge, therefore, seated himself at his desk. He felt more at ease there, and so to speak, more strong. There his back was turned to the window, his face was half-hidden in shadow; and, in case of need, he could, by bending over his desk, conceal his surprise, or any sign of discomfiture.

The prisoner, on the contrary, stood in the full light, and not a movement of his features, not the fluttering of an eyelid, would escape the attention of the judge.

He seemed to have entirely recovered from his indisposition; and his features had assumed an expression of careless indifference, or of complete resignation.

"Do you feel better?" inquired M. Segmuller.

"I feel very well."

"I hope," continued the judge, paternally, "that you will know how to moderate your transports after this. Yesterday you tried to destroy yourself. It would have been another great crime added to many others—a crime which——"

With a brusque gesture, the prisoner interrupted him.

"I have committed no crime," said he, in a rough, but no longer threatening, voice.

"I was attacked, and I defended myself. Anyone has a right to do that. There were three enraged men upon me. It was a great misfortune, and I would give my right hand to repair it; but my conscience does not reproach me—that much!"

"That much," was a contemptuous snap of his finger and thumb.

"Yet I have been arrested and treated as an assassin," he continued. "When I saw myself interred in that living tomb which you call a secret cell, I was afraid; I lost my senses. I said to myself: 'My boy, they have buried you alive; and it is better to die, and that quickly, if you do not wish to suffer.' Then I tried to strangle myself. My death would have brought sorrow to no one. I have neither wife nor child dependent upon me. To prevent me from destroying myself after, I was bled; they placed me in a strait-jacket, as if I were a madman. Mad! I really believed I should become so. All night long the jailers were around me, like children who are amusing themselves by tormenting a chained animal. They watched me; they talked about me;

they passed the candle to and fro before my eyes."

All this was uttered with intense bitterness, but without any display of anger—forcibly, but with no attempt at oratorical display; uttered, in short, as one's deep emotions and convictions are always uttered.

And the same thought entered the mind of the judge and of the detective at the same instant.

"This man," they thought, "is very clever; it will not be easy to get the advantage of him."

After a moment's reflection M. Segmuller said:

"This explains your first act of despair in the prison; but later, this morning even, you refused the nourishment that was offered to you."

The man's lowering face brightened suddenly on hearing this remark; he gave a comical wink, and finally burst into a hearty laugh—a gay, frank, sonorous laugh.

"That," said he, "is quite another thing. Certainly, I refused all they offered me, and now I will tell you why. I had my hands confined in the strait-jacket, and the jailer tried to feed me as a nurse feeds a baby with broth. Ah! no, I thank you. I closed my lips with all my strength. Then he tried to force open my mouth and push the spoon in, as he would open the mouth of a sick dog and push his medicine down his throat. Devil take his impertinence! I tried to bite him; that is the truth, and if I had succeeded in getting his finger between my teeth, it would have stayed there. And only because I have done this, they raise their hands to heaven in holy horror, and pointing at me say: 'Here is a terrible man! a horrible rascal!'"

He seemed to enjoy the recollection of the scene exceedingly, for he burst into another hearty laugh, to the great amazement of Lecoq, and to the great scandal of good Goquet, the clerk.

M. Segmuller also found it very difficult to conceal his intense surprise.

"You are too reasonable, I hope," said he, at last, "to attach any blame to these men, who, in confining you, were merely obeying the orders of their superior officers, and who were only trying to save you from your own violent passions."

"Hum!" responded the prisoner, becoming serious at once. "I do, however, and if I had one of them in a corner— But I shall get over it. If I know myself, I have no more spite in my composition than a chicken."

"It depends only upon yourself how you are to be treated; be calm and they will never place you in a strait-jacket. But you must be quiet and well-behaved."

The murderer sadly shook his head.

"I shall be very prudent hereafter," said he; "but it is terribly hard to stay in prison when one has nothing to do. If I had comrades, we could laugh and chat, and the time would slip by; but to remain alone, entirely alone, in that cold cell, where one hears not even a sound—it is horrible. It is so damp there that the water trickles down the walls, and one might swear that the moisture was real tears, men's tears, issuing from the stone."

The judge bent over the desk to make a note. The word "comrades" had attracted his attention, and he proposed to make the prisoner explain it later.

"If you are innocent," he remarked, "you will soon be released; but it is necessary to establish your innocence."

"What must I do to establish it?"

"Tell the truth, the whole truth: answer honestly and unreservedly the questions I shall put to you."

"As for that, you may depend upon me."

He lifted his hands, as if to call upon God and man to witness his sincerity. M. Segmuller ordered him to drop it, adding:

"Parties who are accused do not take the oath."

"Indeed!" said the man, with an astonished air; "that is strange!"

Although the judge had apparently paid but little attention to the prisoner, he had not failed to notice his every movement. He had desired to reassure him, to make him feel at ease, to quiet his suspicions as much as possible; and he believed that this result had been attained.

"Now," said he, "you will give me your attention; and do not forget that your liberty depends upon your frankness. What is your name?"

"May."

"What is your Christian name?"

"I have none."

"That is impossible."

A movement of the prisoner betrayed an impatience which was quickly suppressed.

"This," he replied, "is the third time since yesterday I have received that answer. What I told you is the truth, however. If I were a liar, nothing would be easier than for me to tell you that my name was Peter, James, or John. But lying is not my *forte*. Really, I have no Christian name. If it were a question of surnames, it would be quite another thing. I have had plenty of them."

"What are they?"

"Let me see—to commence with, when I was with Father Fougasse, I was called Affiloir, because, you see——"

"Who was this Father Fougasse?"

"The king of men for wild beasts, Monsieur. Ah! he could boast of a menagerie that was a menagerie. Tigers, lions, paroquets of every color, serpents as large as your thigh—he had everything. But unfortunately——"

Was the man jesting, or was he in earnest? It was so hard to decide, that M. Segmuller and Lecoq were equally in doubt. Goquet, while writing his report, laughed.

"Enough," interrupted the judge. "How old are you?"

"Forty-four or forty-five years of age."

"Where were you born?"

"In Brittany, probably."

In this reply M. Segmuller thought he discovered an inclination to levity, which must be repressed.

"I warn you," said he, severely, "that if you go on in this way your liberty will be greatly compromised. Each of your responses is a breach of propriety."

The most sincere distress, mingled with anxiety, was visible upon the countenance of the murderer.

"Ah! I meant no offence, sir," he sighed. "You questioned me and I replied. You will see that I have spoken the truth, if you will allow me to tell you the history of the whole affair."

CHAPTER XIX

"When the prisoner speaks, the prosecution is instructed," is an old proverb at the Palais de Justice.

It does, indeed, seem almost impossible for a culprit, closely watched by the judge, to speak more than a few words without betraying his intentions or his thoughts; without, in short, revealing more or less of the secret he is endeavoring to conceal.

Even the most simple-minded of criminals understand this, and those who are most shrewd, are generally most reserved.

Confining themselves entirely to the few facts upon which they have founded their defence, they leave this safe ground only when they are absolutely compelled to do so, and then only with the utmost caution.

When questioned, they reply of course, but always briefly; and they are very sparing of details.

In this case, however, the accused was prodigal of words. He did not seem to apprehend that there was danger lest he should cut his own throat. He did not hesitate like those who are fearful of misplacing a word of the romance they are substituting for the truth.

Under other circumstances this fact would have been a strong argument in his favor.

"You may tell your own story, then," was M. Segmuller's response to the indirect request of the prisoner.

The murderer did not attempt to conceal the joy which had been awakened in his heart by being allowed to plead his own cause, in his own way.

The sparkling of his eyes, the dilation of his nostrils revealed his satisfaction.

He seated himself, threw his head back, passed his tongue over his lips as if to moisten them, and said:

"Am I to understand that you wish to hear my history?"

"Yes."

"Then you must know that one day about forty-five years ago, Father Tringlot, the manager of a travelling company of athletes and acrobats, was going from Guingamp to Sainte-Briene. He was making the journey in two large carriages with his wife, his equipments, and the members of his company. Very well. But soon after leaving quite a large city named Chatelaudren, he perceived something white lying by the roadside, near the edge of a ditch. 'I must go and see what that is,' he said to his wife. He stopped the horses, descended from the carriage, went to the ditch, picked up the object and uttered a cry of surprise. You will ask me 'what this man has found?' Ah! *mon Dieu!* A mere trifle. He had found your very humble servant; then aged about six months."

With these last words, he made a low bow to his auditors.

"Naturally, Father Tringlot carried me to his wife," he continued. "She was a kind-hearted woman. She took me, examined me, fed me, and said: 'He is a strong, healthy child; we will keep him, since his mother has been so wicked as to abandon him. I will teach him; and in five or six years he will be an honor to us.' Then they tried to decide upon a name for me. It was in the early part of the month of May, so they concluded to call me May; and May I have been from that day to this."

He paused, and looked from one to another of his listeners, as if seeking some sign of approval.

None being forthcoming, he went on with his story:

"Father Tringlot was an uneducated man, and entirely ignorant of the law. He did not inform the authorities that he had found a child, and for this reason, although I was living, I did not exist, for to exist it is necessary to have one's name and birth inscribed upon the mayor's register.

"When I became older, I rather congratulated myself on this omission on Father Tringlot's part.

"I said to myself: 'May, my boy, you have no place on any government register, consequently there is no fear that you will ever be drawn as a soldier.'

"I had no desire to be a soldier; no fancy for being made food for bullets and cannon-balls.

"Afterward, when the age for conscription had passed, a lawyer told me that I would make a great deal of trouble for myself if I sought a place on the civil register at that late day; so I decided to exist surreptitiously.

"And this is why I have no Christian name, and why I cannot say exactly where I was born."

If truth has any particular accent of its own, as moralists have asserted, the murderer had found that accent.

Voice, gesture, glance, expression, all were in accord; not a word of his long story had rung false.

"Now," said M. Segmuller, coldly, "what are your means of subsistence?"

By the discomfited mien of the murderer one would have supposed that he had expected to see his prison doors fly open at the conclusion of his last remarks.

"I have a profession," he replied, plaintively. "The one taught me by Mother Tringlot. I subsist by its practice; and I have lived in France and in other countries."

The judge thought he had found a flaw in the armour.

"Do you say you have lived in foreign countries?" he inquired.

"Yes; during the seventeen years that I formed a part of Monsieur Simpson's company, I travelled most of the time in England and in Germany."

"Then you are a gymnast and an athlete. How is it that your hands are so white and so soft?"

Far from being embarrassed, the prisoner lifted his hands and examined them with evident complacency.

"It is true that they are pretty," said he; "that is because I take good care of them and do not use them."

"Do they pay you, then, for doing nothing?"

"Ah, no, indeed! But, sir, my duty consists in speaking to the public, in turning a compliment, and in making things pass off pleasantly, as the saying is; and, without boasting, I flatter myself that I have a certain knack——"

M. Segmuller stroked his chin, according to his habit when a prisoner committed some grave blunder.

"In that case," said he, "will you give me an exhibition of your talent?"

"Ah, ha," laughed the man, evidently supposing this a jest on the part of the magistrate. "Ah, ha!"

"Obey, if you please," insisted the judge.

The murderer made no objection. His mobile face immediately assumed an entirely different expression; a singular mixture of impudence, conceit, and irony played upon his features.

He caught up a ruler that was lying upon the desk, and in a shrill falsetto voice, and with many flourishes, he began:

"Silence, music! And you, big drum, hold your peace! This, ladies and gentlemen, is the hour, the moment, and the instant for the grand and only performance of these great artists; unequalled in the world in their feats upon the trapeze and on the tight-rope, and in other exercises of grace, suppleness, and strength."

"That is sufficient," interrupted the judge. "You can speak thus in France; but what do you say in Germany?"

"Of course, I use the language of that country."

"Let us see!" commanded M. Segmuller, whose mother-tongue was German.

The prisoner dropped his mocking manner, assumed an air of comical importance, and, without the slightest hesitation he said, in very emphatic tones:

"*Mit Bewilligung der hochloeblichen Obrigkeit wird heute vor hiesiger ehrenwerthen Burgerschaft zum erstenmal aufgefuhrt—Genovesa, oder der——*"*

"Enough," said the judge, harshly.

He rose to conceal his chagrin, perhaps, and added:

"We will send for an interpreter who can tell us whether you speak English as fluently."

On hearing these words, Lecoq modestly stepped forward.

"I speak English," said he.

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* "With the permission of the local authorities, there will now be presented before the honorable citizens, for the first time—Genevieve, or the——"

"Very well. You hear, prisoner?"

But the man was already transformed. Britannic gravity and apathy were written upon his features; his gestures were stiff and constrained, and it was in the most ponderous tones that he said:

"Ladies and gentlemen: Long life to our queen, and to the honorable mayor of this town! No country, England excepted—our glorious England!—could produce such a marvellous thing, such a paragon——"

For a minute or two longer he continued in the same strain.

M. Segmuller was leaning upon his desk, his face bowed upon his hands. Lecoq could not conceal his astonishment.

Only Goquet, the smiling clerk, found the scene amusing.

CHAPTER XX

The keeper of the depot, a functionary who had gained the reputation of being an oracle by twenty years of experience in prisons and with prisoners—a man whom it was difficult to deceive—had written to the judge:

"Surround yourself with every precaution before examining the prisoner, May."

And instead of the dangerous malefactor, the very announcement of whose coming had made the clerk turn pale, the prisoner proved to be a practical, harmless, and jovial philosopher, vain of his eloquence, a man whose existence depended upon his ability to turn a compliment: in short, a somewhat erratic genius.

This was a strange mistake. But this did not cause M. Segmuller to abandon the theory advanced by Lecoq; he had become more than ever convinced of its truth.

If he remained silent, with his elbows propped upon his desk, and his hands clasped over his eyes, it was only that he might gain time for reflection.

The manner and attitude of the prisoner were remarkable.

When his English "compliment" was ended, he remained standing in the centre of the room, his countenance wearing an expression half pleased, half anxious. But he was as much at ease as if he were upon the stage where, if one could believe his story, he had passed the greater part of his life.

By the combined efforts of all his intellectual powers and his penetration, the judge attempted to seize upon something, even if it were only some indication of weakness on his face, which in its mobility was more enigmatical than the bronze face of the sphinx.

Thus far M. Segmuller had been worsted in the encounter.

It is true, however, that he had made no direct attack, nor had he made use of any of the weapons which Lecoq had forged for his use.

But he was none the less annoyed at his defeat. It was easy to discern this by the brusque manner in which he lifted his head after a few moments of silence.

"I see that you speak three European languages correctly," said he. "It is a rare talent."

The prisoner bowed, and smiled complacently.

"But that does not establish your identity," continued the judge. "Have you any acquaintances in Paris? Can you indicate any respectable person who will vouch for the truth of this story?"

"Ah! Monsieur, it is seventeen years since I left France."

"It is unfortunate, but the prosecution would not be content with such reasons. It would be too easy to escape the consequences of one's former life. Tell me of your last patron, Monsieur Simpson. Who was this man?"

"Monsieur Simpson is a rich man," replied the prisoner, rather coldly, "worth more than two hundred thousand francs and honest. In Germany he travelled with a show of marionettes, in England with a collection of phenomena, to suit the taste of the country."

"Very well! This millionaire could testify in your favour; it would be easy to find him, I suppose."

"Certainly," May responded, emphatically. "Monsieur Simpson would willingly do me this favour. It would be easy enough to find him, only it would require considerable time."

"Why?"

"Because at the present moment he is—he must be *en route* to America. It was on account of this journey that I left his company—I detest the ocean."

The intense anxiety that had stopped the beatings of Lecoq's heart was dissipated. He breathed again.

"Ah!" said the judge, very slowly.

"When I say that he is *en route*," resumed the prisoner, "I may be mistaken. He may not have started yet. But he had arranged all his business matters for departure before we separated."

"Upon what ship was he to sail?"

"He did not tell me."

"Where was he when you left him?"

"At Leipsic."

"When was this?"

"Last Wednesday."

M. Segmuller shrugged his shoulders disdainfully.

"Do you say you were in Leipsic on Wednesday? How long have you been in Paris?"

"Since Sunday afternoon, at four o'clock."

"It will be necessary to prove that."

By the contracted brow of the murderer, one would naturally have supposed that he was making a strenuous effort to remember something. For about a minute he seemed to be seeking something. He cast questioning glances first at the ceiling, then at the floor, scratching his head and tapping his foot in evident perplexity.

"How *can* I prove it—how?" he murmured.

The judge did not appear disposed to wait.

"I will make a suggestion to aid you," said he. "The people at the inn where you boarded while in Leipsic must remember you."

"We did not stop at an inn."

"Where did you eat and sleep, then?"

"In Monsieur Simpson's large travelling-carriage; it had been sold, but he was not to give it up until he reached the port from which he was to embark."

"What port was that?"

"I do not know."

Less accustomed to concealing his impressions than the judge, Lecoq could not help rubbing his hands, so great was his satisfaction. He saw that the prisoner was convicted of falsehood—"driven to the wall," as he expressed it.

"So you have only your own affirmation to offer in support of this story?" inquired the judge.

"Wait a moment," said the accused, extending his arm as if to clutch a still vague inspiration, "wait a moment. When I arrived in Paris I had a trunk; it contains my linen, which is all marked with the first letter of my name. There are also some coats, several pairs of pantaloons, and two costumes for wear when I appear in public."

"Go on."

"On my arrival in Paris I took this trunk to a hotel quite near the railway station."

He stopped short, evidently embarrassed.

"What is the name of this hotel?" demanded the judge.

"Alas! that is exactly what I am trying to recollect. I have forgotten it. But I have not forgotten the house. I can see it yet; and, if someone would take me to the neighbourhood, I should certainly recognize it. The people at the hotel would know me; besides, my trunk would prove the truth of my story."

Lecoq mentally resolved to make a tour of investigation through the hotels which surrounded the Northern depot.

"Very well," remarked the judge. "Perhaps we will do as you request. Now, there are two questions which I desire to ask. If you arrived in Paris at four o'clock in the afternoon, how did it happen that by midnight of the same day you had found the Poivrière, a haunt of notorious characters, situated in a lonely spot, and which it would be impossible to find at night if one was not familiar with the locality? In the second place, how does it happen, if you possess such clothing as you describe, that you are so poorly dressed?"

The man smiled at these questions.

"That is what I will explain to you," he responded. "When one travels third-class, one is sure to ruin one's clothing; that is why, on leaving Leipsic, I put on the worst clothing I had. When I arrived here, and felt the pavements of Paris beneath my feet, I went wild with delight. I became a fool. I had some money in my pocket—it was Shrove Sunday—my only thought was to make a night of it. I did not think of changing my clothes. Having formerly found much amusement near the Barrière d'Italie, I hastened there, and entered a wine-shop. While I was eating a morsel, two men came in and began talking about spending the night at a ball at the Rainbow. I asked them to take me with them; they consented. I paid their bill, and we started. But soon after our arrival there these young men left me and joined the dancers. It was not long before I began to weary of playing the part of looker-on. Vexed and disappointed, I left the inn, and being foolish enough to dislike to ask my way, I wandered on and lost my way while traversing a large tract of unoccupied land. I was about to retrace my steps, when I saw a light in the distance. I walked straight toward it, and arrived at that cursed hovel."

"What happened then?"

"Oh! I went in; called for someone. A woman came. I asked for a glass of brandy; she brought it. I sat down and lighted a cigar. Then I looked about me. The interior was horrible enough to frighten one.

Three men and two women were drinking and chatting in low tones at another table. My face did not seem to suit them. One of them rose, came to me and said: 'You are a policeman; you have come here to play the spy on us; that is very plain.' I answered that I was not. He replied that I was. I again declared that I was not. In short, he swore that he was sure of it, and that I had on a false beard. Thereupon he caught hold of my beard and pulled it. This made me mad. I jumped up, and with a blow of my fist felled him to the ground. Misery! In an instant all the others were upon me! I had my revolver—you know the rest."

"And the two women, while this was going on, what were they doing?"

"Ah! I was too busy to pay any attention to them. They disappeared!"

"But you saw them when you entered the saloon—what were they like?"

"They were, upon my word! two big, ugly creatures, as tall as grenadiers, and as dark as moles!"

Between plausible falsehood and improbable truth, justice, human justice, and therefore liable to error, is compelled to decide as best it can.

For the past hour M. Segmuller had not been free from mental disquietude. But his doubts all vanished when he heard the prisoner declare that the two women were tall and dark.

In his opinion this audacious falsehood proved that there was a perfect understanding between the murderer and the Widow Chupin.

If the man had said: "The women were fair," M. Segmuller would not have known what to believe.

Certainly, his satisfaction was great; but his face did not betray it. It was of the utmost importance that the prisoner should believe that he had succeeded in deceiving the judge.

"You must understand how necessary it is to find these women," said the judge kindly. "If their testimony corresponds with your allegations, your innocence will be proved conclusively."

"Yes, I understand that; but how can I put my hand upon them?"

"The police can aid you—these agents are always at the service of prisoners who desire to make use of them in establishing their innocence. Did you make any observations which might aid in the discovery of these women?"

Lecoq, whose eyes never wandered from the prisoner's face, fancied that he saw the least shadow of a smile on the man's lips.

"I remarked nothing," he said, coldly.

M. Segmuller had opened the drawer of his desk a moment before. He now took from it the ear-ring which had been found at the scene of the tragedy, and, handing it abruptly to the prisoner, he asked:

"So you did not notice this in the ear of one of the women?"

The imperturbable coolness of the accused did not forsake him.

He took the ornament, examined it attentively, held it up to the light, admired its brilliant fires, and said:

"It is a very handsome stone; but I did not notice it."

"This stone," remarked the judge, "is a diamond."

"Ah!"

"Yes; and worth several thousand francs."

"So much as that!"

This exclamation was in accord with the spirit of his *rôle,* but the prisoner had failed to assume a suitable show of simplicity, or rather, he had exaggerated it.

A nomad like himself, who had, as he claimed, visited all the capitals of Europe, would not have been so astonished on hearing the value of a diamond.

Still, M. Segmuller did not seem to notice the discrepancy.

"Another thing," said he. "When you threw down your pistol, crying: 'Come and take me,' what did you intend to do?"

"I intended to make my escape."

"In what way?"

"*Dame!* by the door, sir—by—"

"Yes, by the back door," said the judge, with freezing irony. "It remains for you to explain how you—you who had just entered that hovel for the first time—could have known of this door."

For the first time the eye of the prisoner grew troubled; his assurance disappeared. But it was only for an instant; then he laughed, but it was a false laugh, that poorly concealed his anxiety.

"What nonsense!" he responded. "I had just seen the two women go out by that door."

"Pardon me, you have just declared that you did not see the departure of these women; that you were too busy to watch their movements."

"Did I say that?"

"Word for word; the passage shall be read to you. Goquet, read."

The clerk read the passage referred to, but the man undertook to show that they had misunderstood his remark. "He had not said—at least, he did not intend to say—they had quite misunderstood him——"

Lecoq was jubilant.

"Ah! my good fellow," he thought, "you contradict yourself—you are in deep water—you are lost."

This reflection was the more just as the situation of the prisoner was like that of a man who, without knowing how to swim, had advanced into the sea until the water was above his chin. Thus far he had preserved his equilibrium very well; but now he totters—soon he loses his footing—he sinks!

"Enough—enough!" said the judge. "Now, if you started out merely with the intention of amusing yourself, how did it happen that you took your pistol with you?"

"I had it with me while I was travelling, and I did not think to leave it at the hotel any more than I thought to change my clothes."

"Where did you purchase it?"

"It was given me by Monsieur Simpson as a souvenir."

"Confess that this Monsieur Simpson is a very convenient personage," said the judge coldly. "Still, go on with your story. Two chambers only of this murderous weapon have been discharged, and three men were killed. You have not told me the end of the affair."

"Alas!" exclaimed the man, in saddened tones, "what is the use? Two of my assailants had fallen; the struggle now was an equal one. I seized the remaining man, the soldier, about the body, and threw him down. He fell against a corner of the table, and did not rise again."

M. Segmuller had unfolded upon his desk the plan of the saloon drawn by Lecoq.

"Come here," he said, addressing the prisoner, "and indicate upon the paper the precise spot occupied by you and by your adversaries."

May obeyed, and with an assurance of manner a little surprising in a man in his apparent position, he explained the drama.

"I entered," said he, "by this door, marked C; I seated myself at the table, H, which is to the left of the entrance; the others occupied this table, which is between the fireplace, F, and the window, B."

When he had finished:

"I must admit," said the judge, "that your assertions are in perfect accord with the statements of the physicians, who say that one of the shots must have been fired at a distance of about a yard, and the other, at a distance of about two yards."

The accused had triumphed; but he only shrugged his shoulders and murmured:

"That proved that the physicians knew their business."

Lecoq was delighted; he felt that, had he been a judge, he would have conducted this examination in precisely the same way.

He blessed Heaven that had given him M. Segmuller, in place of M. d'Escorval.

"This admitted," resumed the judge, "there remains to be explained a sentence uttered by you when this agent, whom you see here, arrested you."

"What sentence?"

"You said: 'It is the Prussians who are coming; I am lost!' What did you mean by that?"

A fleeting crimson tinged the cheek of the prisoner. It was evident that he had anticipated the other questions, and that he had been prepared for them; but that this one was unexpected.

"It is very strange," said he, with ill-disguised embarrassment, "that I should have said such a thing!"

"Five persons heard you," insisted the judge.

Evidently he was endeavouring to gain time; he was hunting for an explanation.

"After all," replied the man, "the thing is very possible. It was a phrase that was often repeated by an old soldier of Napoleon's body-guard, who, after the battle of Waterloo, entered the service of Monsieur Simpson."

This explanation, though rather slow in coming, was none the less ingenious. At last M. Segmuller appeared to be perfectly satisfied.

"That is very plausible," said he; "but there is one circumstance that passes my comprehension. Were you freed from your assailants before the entrance of the policemen? Answer me, yes or no."

"Yes."

"Then, why, instead of making your escape by the door, whose existence you had divined, did you remain upon the threshold of the communicating door, with a table before you to serve as a barricade, your pistol directed toward the police, holding them at bay?"

The man hung his head, and they were obliged to wait for his response.

"I was a fool," he stammered, at last. "I did not know whether these men were agents of the police force or friends of the men I had killed."

"Your self-interest would have impelled you to flee from one as well as from the other."

The murderer was silent.

"Ah, well!" resumed M. Segmuller, "the prosecution is of the opinion that you designedly and voluntarily exposed yourself to the danger of arrest in order to protect the retreat of the two women who were in the saloon."

"Why should I have risked my own safety for two hussies whom I did not even know?"

"Pardon me. The prosecution are strongly inclined to believe that you know these two women very well."

"I should like to see anyone prove this!"

He laughed sneeringly, but the laugh was frozen upon his lips by the tone of assurance in which the judge uttered these words:

"I will prove this to you!"

CHAPTER XXI

THESE difficult and delicate questions of personal identity are the bane of magistrates.

Railroads, photography, and telegraphic communication have multiplied the means of investigation in vain. Every day it happens that malefactors succeed in deceiving the judge in regard to their true personality, and thus escape the consequences of their former crimes.

This is so frequently the case that a witty attorney-general once laughingly remarked—and, perhaps, he was only half in jest:

"This uncertainty in regard to identity will cease only on the day when the law prescribes that a number shall be branded upon the shoulder of every child whose birth is reported to the mayor."

M. Segmuller certainly wished that a number had been branded upon the enigmatical prisoner before him.

And yet he did not by any means despair, and his confidence, exaggerated though it might be, was not feigned.

He thought this circumstance in connection with the two women was the weak spot in the prisoner's plan of defence—the point upon which he must concentrate all his efforts.

When he felt that his threat had had time to produce its full effect, he continued:

"So, prisoner, you assert that you were acquainted with none of the persons you met in the saloon?"

"I swear it."

"Have you never had occasion to meet one Lacheneur, an individual whose name is connected with this unfortunate affair?"

"I heard this name for the first time when the dying soldier uttered it, adding that this Lacheneur was an old comedian."

He heaved a deep sigh, and continued:

"Poor soldier! I had just dealt him his death-blow; and yet his last words testified to my innocence."

This sentimental outburst produced no impression whatever upon the magistrate.

"Consequently," resumed the judge, "you are willing to accept the deposition of this soldier?"

The man hesitated, as if conscious that he had fallen into a snare, and that he would be obliged to weigh each response carefully.

"I accept it," said he, at last. "Of course I accept it."

"Very well. This soldier, you must recollect, wished to revenge himself upon Lacheneur, who, by promising him money, had inveigled him into a conspiracy. A conspiracy against whom? Evidently against you; and yet you pretend that you had only arrived in Paris that evening, and that the merest chance had alone brought you to the Poivrière. Can you reconcile such conflicting statements?"

The prisoner had the hardihood to shrug his shoulders, disdainfully.

"I see the matter in an entirely different light," said he. "These people were plotting mischief against—I do not know whom—and it was because I was in the way that they sought a quarrel with me, without any cause whatever."

The judge's sword-thrust had been skilfully made, but it had been as skilfully parried; so skilfully, indeed, that the smiling clerk could not conceal an approving grimace. Besides, on principle, he always took the part of the prisoner—in a very mild way, understand.

"Let us consider the circumstances that followed your arrest," resumed M. Segmuller. "Why did you refuse to answer all questions?"

A gleam of real or assumed resentment shone in the eyes of the prisoner.

"This examination," he growled, "will be quite sufficient to make a culprit out of an innocent man!"

"I advise you, in your own interest, to deport yourself properly. Those who arrested you observed that you were conversant with all the formalities, and with the rules of the prison."

"Ah! sir, have I not told you that I have been arrested and put in prison several times—always on account of my papers. I told you the truth, and consequently you should not taunt me."

He had dropped his mask of careless gayety, and had assumed a surly, discontented tone.

But his troubles were not ended, the battle had but just begun. M. Segmuller laid a tiny linen bag upon his desk.

"Do you recognize this?" he asked.

"Perfectly! It is the package that was placed in the safe by the keeper of the prison."

The judge opened the bag, and poured the dust that it contained out upon a sheet of paper.

"You are aware, prisoner," said he, "that this dust is from the mud that adhered to your feet. The agent of police who collected it went to the station-house where you had spent the preceding night, and he has discovered between this dust and the earth which forms the floor of the station-house a perfect uniformity."

The man listened with wide-open mouth.

"Hence," continued the judge, "it was certainly at the station-house, and *designedly*, that you soiled your feet in the mud. What was your object?"

"I wished——"

"Let me finish. Resolved to guard the secret of your identity, and to assume the individuality of a man of the lower orders of society—of a mountebank, if you please—you reflected that the delicacy of your appearance would betray you. You foresaw the impression that would be produced when, upon removing the coarse, ill-fitting boots that you wore, the officers saw shapely, nicely cared for feet like yours; for they are as well kept as your hands. What did you do, therefore? You emptied upon the ground the water that was in the pitcher in your cell, and then dabbled your feet in the mud that had been formed."

During these remarks the face of the prisoner had expressed, by turns, anxiety, the most comical astonishment, irony, and at last a frank gayety.

At the conclusion he seemed unable to restrain the burst of merriment which prevented him from making any reply.

"This is what one gets by searching around for twelve or fourteen hours," he said, as soon as he could speak, and addressing not the judge, but Lecoq. "Ah! Mister Agent, it is well to be sharp, but not so sharp as that. The truth is, that when I was taken to the station-house, forty-eight hours—thirty-six of them spent on the railroad cars—had elapsed since I had taken off my shoes. My feet were red, swollen, and burned like fire. What did I do? I poured some water on them. As for your other suspicions, if I have a soft and white skin, it is only because I take care of myself. Besides, as is usual with most men in my profession, I never wear anything but slippers on my feet. This is so true that on leaving Leipsic, I owned only one pair of boots, and that was an old cast-off pair given me by Monsieur Simpson."

Lecoq struck himself upon the breast. "Fool, imbecile, idiot, that I am!" he thought. "He was waiting to be questioned in regard to this circumstance. When this man, who is wonderfully shrewd, saw me take this dust, he divined my intentions; he has been seeking for an explanation, and he has found it—and it is a plausible one—any jury would believe it."

M. Segmuller was saying the same thing to himself. But he was not so surprised nor so overcome by the cleverness of the prisoner.

"Let us continue," said he. "Do you still persist in your affirmations, prisoner?"

"Yes."

"Very well; then I shall be forced to tell you that you are saying what is untrue."

The prisoner's lips trembled very visibly, and he faltered:

"May my first mouthful of bread strangle me, if I have uttered a single falsehood!"

"A single falsehood!—wait."

The judge took from his desk-drawer the moulds of the footprints, which Lecoq had made, and showing them to the murderer, he said:

"You have told me that these women were as tall as grenadiers; now see the footprints made by these immense women. They were as 'dark as moles,' you said; a witness will tell you that one of them was a small, very delicate blonde, with an exceedingly sweet voice."

He sought the prisoner's eyes, found them, and added slowly:

"And this witness is the coachman whose carriage was hired in the Rue de Chevaleret by the two fugitives."

This sentence fell upon the prisoner like a thunderbolt; he grew pale, tottered and leaned against the wall to keep himself from falling.

"Ah! you have told me the truth!" scornfully continued the pitiless judge. "Who, then, is this man who was waiting for you while you were in the Poivrière? Who is this accomplice who, after your arrest, dared to enter the Widow Chupin's hut to regain something compromising in its nature—a letter, undoubtedly—which he knew he would find in the pocket of the Widow Chupin's apron? Who is this devoted and courageous friend who feigned drunkenness so effectually that even the police were deceived, and placed him in confinement with you? Dare you deny that you have not arranged your system of defence in concert with him? Can you affirm that he did not give the Widow Chupin counsel as to the course she must pursue?"

But already, thanks to an almost superhuman effort, the man had mastered his agitation.

"All this," said he, in a harsh voice, "is a mere invention of the police!"

However faithfully one may describe an examination of this sort, it gives the reader no more idea of the scene than cold ashes give the effect of a glowing fire.

One can note down the slightest word; but one can never portray the repressed animation, the impassioned movements, the studied reticence, the intonation, the glances full of hatred and suspicion which encounter each other—in short, the terrible anguish of a mortal struggle.

When the prisoner reeled beneath the power of his accusation, the judge trembled with joy.

"He weakens," he thought, "he yields—he is mine!"

But all hope of immediate success vanished when he saw this redoubtable adversary struggle against his momentary weakness, and arm himself for the fight with a renewed and still more vigorous energy.

The judge comprehended that it would require more than one assault to overcome such a nature.

So, in a voice rendered still more harsh by disappointment, he resumed:

"Evidently you are determined to deny evidence itself."

The murderer had turned to bronze again. He must have bitterly regretted his weakness, for a fiendish audacity glittered in his eyes.

"What evidence!" he demanded, frowning. "This romance invented by the police is very plausible, I do not deny it; but it seems to me that the truth is quite as probable. You tell me of a coachman, who was employed by two small, fair-haired women —who can prove that those women are the same who fled from this accursed hovel?"

"The police officer followed their tracks upon the snow."

"At night, across fields cut every now and then by ditches, and up a long street, while a fine rain was falling and a thaw was beginning! That is very probable!"

He extended his arm toward Lecoq, and in a tone of crushing scorn, he added:

"A man must have great confidence in himself, or a wild longing for advancement, to ask that a man's head should be cut off on such evidence as this!"

While the smiling clerk made his pen fly across the paper, he said to himself:

"The arrow entered the bull's eye this time!"

The reproach did indeed seem just; and it cut Lecoq to the quick. He was so incensed that, forgetful of the place in which he was, he sprang up, furious.

"This circumstance would be of slight importance," said he, vehemently, "if it were not one of a long chain——"

"Silence!" interrupted the judge.

Then turning to the prisoner he said:

"The court does not use proofs and testimony collected by the police until it has examined and weighed them."

"No matter," murmured the man. "I would like to see this coachman."

"Have no fears; he shall repeat his deposition in your presence."

"Very well. I am satisfied then. I will ask him how he can distinguish people's faces when it is as dark as——"

He checked himself, enlightened apparently by a sudden inspiration.

"How stupid I am!" he exclaimed. "I lose my temper about these people while you know all the while who they are. For you know, do you not, since the coachman must of course have taken them to their homes."

M. Segmuller saw that the man understood him. He saw, too, that he was endeavouring to increase the shadow of doubt and uncertainty that overhung the very point upon which the prosecution was so anxious to obtain information.

An incomparable comedian, the man had uttered these words with an accent of the most sincere candour. But the irony was evident, and if he sneered, it was because he felt that he had nothing to fear from this quarter.

"If you are consistent," remarked the judge, "you will also deny the existence of an accomplice, of a—comrade."

"Of what use would it be to deny it, since you believe nothing that I say? You only a moment ago insinuated that my former employer was an imaginary personage; what shall I say of this pretended accomplice? Ah! the agents who invented him have made him indeed a faithful friend. Not content with escaping them once, he comes to place himself in their clutches for a second time. These gentlemen pretend that he conferred first with me, and afterward with the Widow Chupin. How did *that* happen? Perhaps, after they took him from the cell in which I was confined, they shut him up with the old woman."

Goquet the clerk wrote and admired.

"Here," he thought, "is a man of brain, who understands his case, and who will have no need of the eloquence of a lawyer in pleading his cause before a jury."

"And after all," continued the prisoner, "what are the proofs against me? The name Lacheneur, faltered by a dying man, some footprints upon the melting snow, the declaration of a coachman, a vague suspicion on the subject of a drunken man. Are these all? They do not amount to much——"

"Enough!" interrupted M. Segmuller. "Your assurance is great now, but your embarrassment a moment since was even greater. What was the cause of it?"

"The cause!" exclaimed the prisoner, in a sort of rage; "the cause! Can you not see, Monsieur, that you are torturing me frightfully, pitilessly? I am an innocent man, and you are trying to deprive me of my life. You have been turning me this way and that for so many hours that I begin to feel as if I were standing on the guillotine; and at each word that I utter, I ask myself if this is the one that will make the axe fall upon my head. My anxiety and dismay surprise you, do they, when I have felt the cold knife graze my throat at least twenty times? I would not desire my worst enemy to be subjected to torture like this."

He was, indeed, suffering terribly. His hair was saturated with perspiration, and great drops of sweat stood out upon his cheeks and rolled from his pallid brow down upon his beard.

"I am not your enemy," said the judge, more gently. "A judge is neither the friend nor the enemy of a prisoner; he is simply the friend of truth and of the law. I am not seeking an innocent man or a culprit; I merely wish to arrive at the truth. I must know who you are—and I do know."

"Ah!—if the assertion costs me my life—I am May."

"No."

"Who am I, then? Some great man in disguise? Ah! I would that I were! In that case, I should have satisfactory papers. I would show them to you, and you would set me free, for you know very well, my good sir, that I am as innocent as yourself."

The judge had left his desk, and seated himself by the fireplace, only a couple of feet from the prisoner.

"Do not insist," said he.

Then suddenly changing both manner and tone, he added, with the urbanity that a man of the world displays when addressing an equal:

"Do me the honor, Monsieur, to believe me gifted with sufficient perspicuity to recognize, under the difficult *rôle* that you play to such perfection, a very superior gentleman—a man endowed with remarkable talent."

Lecoq saw that this sudden change of manner had unmanned the prisoner.

He tried to laugh, but the laugh died in his throat as mournful as a sob, and tears glittered in his eyes.

"I will not torture you any longer, Monsieur," continued the judge. "Upon this ground of subtle reasoning I confess that you have conquered me. When I return to to the charge I shall have proofs enough in my possession to crush you."

He reflected for a moment, then slowly, and lingering over each word, he added:

"Only do not expect from me then the consideration I have shown you to-day. Justice is human, Monsieur; that is, she is indulgent to certain crimes. She has fathomed the depths of the abyss into which blind passion may hurl even an honest man. To-day, any assistance that will not conflict with my duty I freely offer to you. Speak, Monsieur. Shall I send away this officer of police? Do you wish me to send my clerk out of the room upon some errand?"

He said no more. He wanted to see the effect of this last, this supreme effort.

The murderer darted upon him one of those glances that penetrate to the depths of one's inmost soul. His lips moved; one might have supposed that he was about to speak. But no; he crossed his arms upon his breast and murmured:

"You are very frank, Monsieur. Unfortunately for me. I am only a poor devil, as I have told you, May, artist—to speak to the public and turn a compliment."

"I am forced to yield to your decision," said the judge, sadly. "The clerk will now read the report of your examination—listen."

Goquet read the deposition.

The prisoner listened without making any remark, but when the reading was concluded he refused to sign the document, fearing, he said, "some hidden treachery."

A moment after, the soldiers who had brought him there, led him away.

CHAPTER XXII

When the prisoner had departed, M. Segmuller sank back in his arm-chair, weary, exhausted, and in that state of nervous prostration which so often follows protracted, but fruitless efforts.

He had scarcely strength to bathe his burning forehead and his glittering eyes in cool, refreshing water. This frightful scene had lasted for seven consecutive hours, at least.

The smiling clerk, who all the while had kept his place at his desk, busily writing, rose, glad of an opportunity to stretch his limbs and snap his fingers, cramped by holding the pen.

Still, he was not in the least bored. These dramas which had been unrolled in his presence for so many years, had never ceased to afford him a half-theatrical interest, increased by the uncertainty in which the *dénouement* was shrouded, and by the consciousness of some slight participation in the affair.

"What a knave!" he exclaimed, after vainly waiting some expression of opinion from the judge or from the detective; "what a rascal!"

Ordinarily, M. Segmuller accorded some degree of confidence to the long experience of his clerk. He sometimes even went so far as to consult him, doubtless somewhat in the same style that Molière consulted his servant.

But this time he did not accept his opinion.

"No," said he in a thoughtful tone, "that man is not a knave. When I spoke to him kindly he was really touched; he wept, he hesitated. I would have sworn that he was about to confide everything to me."

"Ah! he is a remarkable man—a man of wonderful power!" said Lecoq.

The detective was sincere in his praise. Although the prisoner had disappointed his plans, and had even insulted him, he could not help admiring his adversary's shrewdness and courage.

He had prepared himself to struggle with this man to the death—he hoped to conquer him. Nevertheless, in his secret soul Lecoq experienced that sympathy which a "foeman worthy of one's steel" always inspires.

"What coolness, what courage!" continued Lecoq. "Ah! there is no denying it, his system of defence—of absolute denial—is a *chef-d'œuvre*. It is perfect. And how admirably he sustained the different *rôle* of buffoon! Sometimes I could scarcely restrain my admiration. What are all these famous comedians beside him? The greatest actors need the aid of stage scenery to support the illusion. This man almost convinced me even against my reason."

"Do you know what your very just criticism proves?" inquired the judge.

"I am listening, Monsieur."

"Ah, well! I have arrived at this conclusion—either this man is really May, artist—for the paying of compliments, as he says—or he belongs to the highest rank of society; not to the middle classes. It is only in the lowest ranks or in the highest, that you encounter such grim energy as he has displayed, such scorn of life, as well as such remarkable presence of mind and resolution. A vulgar bourgeois attracted to the Poivriére by some shameful passion would have confessed it long ago."

"But, Monsieur, this man is not the buffoon, May," replied the young detective.

"No, certainly not," responded M. Segmuller; "we must, therefore, decide upon some plan of action."

He smiled kindly, and added, in a friendly voice:

"It was unnecessary to tell you that, Monsieur Lecoq. Quite unnecessary, since to you belongs the honour of having detected this fraud. As for me, I confess, that if I had not been warned in advance, I should at this moment be the dupe of this clever artist."

The young man bowed; a blush of modesty tinged his cheeks, but his pleased vanity sparkled in his eyes.

What a difference between this friendly and benevolent judge and that other, so taciturn and so haughty.

This man, at least, understood, appreciated, and encouraged him; and it was with a common theory and an equal ardor that they were about to devote themselves to a search for the truth.

These thoughts flitted through Lecoq's mind; then he reflected that his satisfaction was a trifle premature, and that success was still extremely doubtful.

This rather chilling thought restored his coolness.

"Monsieur, an idea has just occurred to me," he said, calmly.

"Let me hear it."

"The Widow Chupin, as you undoubtedly recollect, alluded to her son, a certain Polyte——"

"Yes."

"Why not question him? He must know all the *habitués* of the Poivrière, and would perhaps give us valuable information regarding Gustave, Lacheneur, and the murderer himself. As he is not in solitary confinement, he has probably heard of his mother's arrest; but it seems to me impossible that he should suspect our present perplexity."

"Ah! you are a hundred times right!" exclaimed the judge. "Why did I not think of that myself? To-morrow morning I will question this man, whose situation renders him less likely to have been tampered with than these parties. I will also question his wife."

He turned to his clerk and added:

"Quick, Goquet, prepare a summons in the name of the wife of Hippolyte Chupin, and address an order to the keeper of the depot for her husband!"

But night was coming on. It was already so dark that one could not see to write, and the clerk rang the bell and asked for a light. Just as the messenger who had brought in the lamps was leaving the room, someone rapped. The door opened, and the keeper of the prison entered with his hat in his hand.

During the past twenty-four hours this worthy officer had been greatly exercised in mind on account of the mysterious prisoner whom he had placed in secret cell No. 3, and he came to the judge for advice.

"I come to ask if I am to retain the prisoner, May, in solitary confinement?"

"Yes."

"I fear his attacks of frenzy, still I dislike to confine him in the strait-jacket again."

"Leave him free in his cell," replied M. Segmuller, "and tell the keepers to treat him kindly, but yet to exercise a constant surveillance over him."

By the provisions of Article 613, although accused parties are confined to the authority of the government, the judge is allowed, previous to the trial, to adopt such measures concerning them as he may deem necessary for the interests of the prosecution.

The keeper bowed; then he added:

"You have doubtless succeeded in establishing the identity of this prisoner?"

"Unfortunately, I have not."

The keeper shook his head with a knowing air.

"In that case, my conjectures were correct," said he. "It seems to me more than sufficiently demonstrated that this man is a malefactor of the worst sort—an old offender certainly, and one who has the strongest interest in concealing his identity. You will find that you have to deal with a man who has been sentenced to the galleys for life, and who has managed to make his escape from Cayenne."

"Perhaps you are mistaken."

"Hum! I shall be greatly surprised if I discover that I am. I must admit that my opinion in this matter corresponds exactly with that of Monsieur Gevrol, the most experienced and the most skilful of our inspectors. I agree with him in thinking that young detectives are often over-zealous, and run after phantoms originated in their own brains."

Lecoq, crimson with wrath, was about to make an angry response, when M. Segmuller, with a gesture, imposed silence.

It was the judge who, with a smile, replied to the keeper.

"Upon my word, my dear friend," he said, "the more I study this affair, the more convinced I am of the correctness of the theory advanced by the 'too-zealous detective.' But, after all, I am not infallible, and I shall depend upon your counsel and assistance."

"Oh! I have means of verifying my assertion," interrupted the keeper; "and I hope before the end of the next twenty-four hours that our man will have been identified, either by the police or by some one of his fellow-prisoners."

With these words he took his leave, and Lecoq sprang up, furious.

"You see that this Gevrol already speak ill of me; he is jealous."

"Ah, well! what does that matter to you? If you succeed, you will have your revenge. If you are mistaken—I am mistaken, too."

And then, as it was already late, M. Segmuller confided to Lecoq's keeping the articles which the latter had accumulated in support of his theory. He also placed in his hands the diamond ear-ring, whose owner must be discovered, then the letter signed Lacheneur, which had been found in the pocket of the dead soldier.

He gave him several commissions, and, after requesting him to make his appearance promptly on the morrow, he dismissed him with these words:

"Now go; and good luck attend you!"

(*To be continued*)

The Rev. Mr. Collins Proposes

"MY REASONS for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish; secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly,—which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier,—that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honor of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked, too!) on this subject; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford—between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs. Jenkinson was arranging Miss de Bourgh's footstool—that she said,

"'Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. Choose properly, choose a gentlewoman, for *my* sake; and for your *own*, let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her!'

"Allow me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond anything I can describe; and your wit and vivacity, I think, must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in favor of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views are directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighbourhood, where, I assure you, there are many amiable young women. But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honored father (who, however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters, that the loss of them might be as little as possible, when the melancholy event takes place,—which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem.

"And now, nothing remains for me but to assure you, in the most animated language, of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with; and that one thousand pounds in the four per cents., which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married."

JANE AUSTEN.

THERMOMETER DRAMAS

BY EDWARD MOTT WOOLLEY

IN California many orange groves have electric frost-alarm systems, operated automatically by thermometers among the trees. The owner of such a grove goes to bed knowing that a gong will clang in his house when the mercury drops to the danger point and the time comes to start his heaters. Another method of protecting citrus crops is the patrol of whole districts by men known as "night riders," who go about in motor cars and inspect government-tested thermometers. One such district covers thirty-five square miles and has seven routes, five hundred telephones, and one hundred and thirty-six thermometers. Each rider covers twelve miles, takes record readings, and gets back to headquarters every fifty minutes all night. On the accuracy and infallibility of these thermometers the fruit growers stake their existence.

These little thermometer dramas from the orange country are striking but simple examples of uses for temperature-measuring instruments. Infinitely more complex and dramatic are a multitude of uses for thermometric apparatus built into allied devices. These not only measure and record temperature, but even control it. No less marvelous are the associated mechanisms that deal with atmospheric pressure and other scientific elements.

You will find such instruments employed today in every conceivable activity—the home, the factory, the traffic of land, sea and air; in the hospital, laboratory, ocean steamship, ammunition plant, dairy; on the farm. Their story is one of progress—of a tremendous service to the world. The uses of these instruments are bewildering.

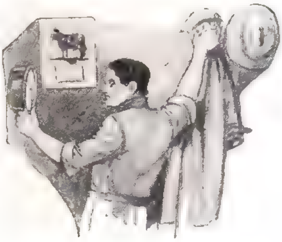
And this is a narrative of *uses*. Though synonymous with the Taylor Instrument Companies of Rochester, N. Y., it is not a factory story, because achievements are more to the point than tours through a manufacturing plant. The application of a product to a thousand vital uses is the best means of visualizing the Institution back of that product.

The Taylor Instrument Companies compose the Institution, the bone-work, you might say, of this brief but stirring drama—for drama it is. The Taylor Instrument Companies and their trade name, *Tycos*, may be read into every line and paragraph of this story. Beginning in a single room at Rochester in 1851, this business now has the largest plant in the world for making indicating, recording and controlling temperature and pressure instruments. There is scarcely an industry in the land where some of the 8,000 styles of Tycos instruments are not used.

EVEN fragmentary glimpses of such uses show how marvelously science has probed the secrets of nature and harnessed its laws. There are instruments that dip into the future and accumulate veritable Sherlock Holmes evidence. For example, the barometer in its various applications is to most people a great and lasting mystery. The Taylor Instrument Companies' Stormoguide is a special type of barometer designed for yachtsmen, builders, business concerns, motorists, and others whose interests need safeguarding by advance weather information. With this device, precautions can be taken against rain, sleet, snow, cold or heat, or high winds. John Doe and his family are planning a motor tour, with four hundred miles of mud ahead. They consult this seersaying instrument before starting, and it observes without hesitation, "Rain inside of 24 hours." Without incredulity, they wait.

Or drop in on rugged John Stockman, whose ranch is far up in some canyon of the northwest. When he gazes down the gorge into a cloudless sunrise he sees no evidence of snow in the air; but back at his cabin the Stormoguide announces in its own strange language, "A blizzard is on its way." John hurries his stock to shelter. He uses his Stormoguide, too, in planning shipments of livestock and other perishables.

For the farmer in general, the Stormoguide is a whole intelligence service. In its own enigmatical way it reaches into the Unseen and writes its warning. It tells Farmer Hayfield, for instance, that rain is coming; that he must postpone his mowing and put under shelter the hay already cut.



Super-human indeed is the barometer. From the pilot-house of a ship old Captain Mariner looks out on a clear sky and smooth sea. But furrows dig into his brow when he reads the stoical face of his prophet. With finality, it tells him that dangerous weather is sweeping across the waters. The captain does not argue with this machine which reads the future. Did you ever think why he accepts its verdict? Simply because at the instrument factory it was created to tell the truth. Its eugenics were right.

And perhaps somewhere out over the sea an aviator looks down from his mechanical bird. Half lost in mist, the water seems thousands of feet below. Confused, the flyer takes the word of his Altimeter—another instrument which has none of the five human senses but possesses a sixth mysterious sense. Silently it says to him, "Our altitude is only five hundred feet." So the gasoline winger turns its nose upward.

The motorist has his Auto-Altimeter, which tells him the altitude wherever the car goes, and will also indicate what the weather is to be. In winter, his freezometer tests his non-freezing radiator solution. He knows whether it will withstand zero, or perhaps ten below.

And of course he has his chargometer to test his storage battery, and with a gasoline hydrometer—for testing the blood of the motor—they can't fool him on "gas."

Incidentally, the Tycos pedometer registers leg mileage. The compass—now so common that it is taken for granted—is really the signboard of the world. Compasses come from the Taylor plant by tens of thousands.

TODAY the skilled agriculturist, using a soil thermometer, sometimes tests the temperature of the ground before planting, forestalling insect and disease pests, and getting the seed at work as early as the warmth of the soil permits. Or take the case of Florist George Poppy, as we may call him. George has a hygrometer—another of the mystifying instruments from that Rochester Institution. George Poppy's hygrometer tells him to look out for his delicate plants. It is gradually being recognized as indispensable in all places where an improper degree of moisture would be injurious.

In a valley some hundreds of miles away lives Jimmy Coe, who gave up a city job ten years ago for the difficult poultry "game." Without incubators Jimmy would be quite helpless, for he raises 20,000 ducklings and chicks at one time. And incubators would be of no value without accurate thermometers. It is only an exact degree of heat, maintained over the necessary period, that works legerdemain in those eggs. In some unfathomable way, heat merges into delicate down and fragile little bones—*life*.

Then, of course, Jimmy Coe uses incubator hygrometers—which indicate the degree of moisture. Each of these curious instruments takes the place of an egg in the tray of the incubator, and shows certain conditions under which nature is slowly shaping the tiny bird inside. Here, too, electric thermometer alarms keep guard.

And in the city, nurses watch the red-ink story of the thermometers on baby incubators. It is now possible to save 85 per cent. of prematurely-born infants, where formerly the mortality was high.

Out on the sea again, deep in the powder magazine of a warship, recording and signaling Tycos thermometers keep sleepless watch. If by ill chance the temperature rises to the point which marks the beginning of danger, these hitherto dumb but near-human instruments are suddenly endowed with strident voices that ring in the officers' ears on deck. So, too, in the making of explosives, Tycos sentinels of inflexible veracity work day and night. All the great organization, skill and responsibility of the Institution back of them, is the guarantee that these instruments will not fail.

SOME day if you visit a steel mill you will see against the wall unexplained electric signals of white, green and red which flash and disappear and come again. Hundreds of feet away, in another building perhaps, are furnaces with white-hot metal boiling like water inside, but sending up venomed flames of crimson and yellow. The signals, working without touch of hands, tell how nearly this hellish brew is kept to the right temperature.

The development of such signaling and heat-controlling instruments has played a big part in the work of the Taylor Instrument Companies. Out of their experimental department have come mechanisms without which modern industrialism could not exist.

The automobile industry, for one, rests primarily on scientific heat-treatment of metals. An automobile is made of *steels*, in the plural. Different parts require their own metal fiber. An axle must be so strong perhaps that an eighty-ton locomotive might dangle from it. A gear must have a surface glassy hard. You demand a brake-rod or steering-knuckle that will stand years of abuse without weakening.

These recording and signaling pyrometers help to make possible such steels. And so highly developed are Taylor instruments and their allied apparatus that superlative degrees of fiery temperature in the furnaces reflect themselves in electric signal colors. Without such mechanism the heat-treating plant would scarcely be better than a blacksmith shop. In the old days men squinted through holes in the furnaces and watched for a "cherry red." Automobiles could not be made that way.

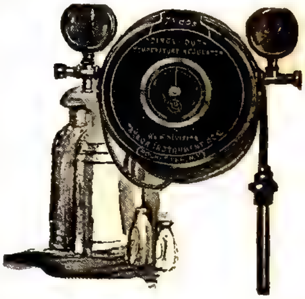
In ore and metal-working plants, and in glass and clay factories and the like, the raw products of the earth are indeed liquid infernos—with the heat up in the thousands. Ordinary temperature instruments would melt like snow; and thus came the radiation pyrometer capable of indicating and electrically recording the highest attainable temperatures.

THERE is scarcely a product of industry in which the maintenance of the right temperature is not essential. Guesswork means the junking of the whole batch at the factory or a faulty product for consumers.

Thus in varnish making sometimes even one degree more or less of temperature spoils the desired result. The unrelaxing discipline of these instruments leaves human control out of the reckoning. So, too, in making synthetic perfumes and flavors, the thermometer is the magic wand of the chemist.

One of the more recent and important of the Taylor Instrument Companies' mechanisms is the Tycos Thermo-Tyme Regulator, used in vulcanizing automobile tires in the making. Operating from a clock-like case, it turns on the steam, maintains the vulcanizer at the requisite degree for a given time, and raises or lowers the temperature to any desired point for a definite period. This action it repeats for any predetermined curve. It shuts off the steam at the psychological second, then nonchalantly releases the imprisoned steam and admits cooling water. This versatile instrument, by eliminating the variables of manual control, materially improves tire quality.

When you go touring in your Hill-Soaring Six you scarcely stop long enough to think that without precise temperature measurement and control there wouldn't be gasoline enough for both you and your neighbor. The petroleum industry affords a conspicuous example of a great business served by these impeccable devices.



And everywhere in industry these Tycos instruments of unchallenged veracity may be found in powerhouses, keeping tab on water, steam, oil, and gases from the furnaces. Tycos recorders point the way to the plugging of fuel leaks and to large economy.

In the old days of candy-making, workmen were bewildered by many loosely defined processes. Who could tell what the word "smooth" really meant? What was a "soft ball" of candy, or a "hard ball"? In that hit-or-miss era before these marvelous instruments came out of the experimental rooms, every candy plant had a supposititious "expert." The ignorant workmen vaguely attributed to this individual the psychic power to divine the moment when candy became smooth or soft or hard. But the men in the front office knew in their hearts that the expert was largely bogus. They lost in spoilage a considerable percentage of their products.

To-day all modern candy plants have automatic experts—temperature machines endowed with super-cerebrums, keen enough to be psychic indeed. No longer is there any leeway in defining the processes which mean good or bad candy.

It was much the same in bakeries. Even with the best flour and other materials, imperfect fermentation sometimes nullified results. To-day absolute fermentation control is obtained by exact regulation of the temperature of dough. Tycos dough thermometers and recording instruments for the dough room safeguard the baking industry. And heat in the bake ovens is under the control of thermometers and pyrometers. The superintendent in his office can tell the temperature of ovens by throwing a switch.

THE service to humanity performed by Tycos instruments is exemplified especially in the sphygmomanometer. It detects the lurking danger of apoplexy and kindred ailments years ahead, and thus by giving the physician a scientific warning enables him to offer advice and treatment based on accurate knowledge, not guesswork.

With this instrument to guide both doctor and patient, it is scarcely too much to say that almost any man may avoid apoplexy if he is examined in time. The sphygmomanometer also is contributory in detecting Bright's disease and other kidney maladies, as well as intestinal toxic conditions.

Briefly, this instrument determines blood pressure. It shows the exact resistance of the arteries to blood flow—in other words, tells whether the arteries are likely to break under the pumping of the heart.

One-thirteenth part of the human body is composed of blood, and the arterial system must carry all of this throughout the body and back to the heart every twenty-three seconds; and any condition interfering with the circulatory process involves seriously life itself.

The use of this form of instrument is known as sphygmomanometry and embrances highly scientific elements, so that any reference here must be loose and general. The utmost crudities marked the early experiments in this direction, but to-day the Tycos Sphygmomanometer stands as the highest achievement of science in this field.

Contributory also in the diagnosis of ailments affecting blood pressure are Tycos urinary glass instruments, for testing the condition of the secretions.

In this connection, too, may be mentioned the health value of scientific bathing. Exact temperatures of water are essential in certain conditions; variations of a single degree may affect results. Thus certain solids in the pores of the skin are soluble only when water is at blood heat.

Baths at a temperature too high take away the tone of the heart; yet when the water is correctly used bathing may be a potent remedy for nervous and other conditions. Patients in hospitals for the insane are now treated in this way; even violent maniacs respond to the scientific bath, and the strait-jacket is falling into disuse.

Persons in good health also find correct bathing of great value—not only for cleanliness but to keep the circulation good, clear the mind, soothe nerves and muscles, and to build up resistance against disease. These healthful effects come largely from the temperature of the water; and so a bath thermometer is not a frill of fancy, but a tool of self-protection.

Bacteria can kill more persons in a day than perished during the world war. Milk may be infected with millions of germs more deadly than the explosives set off in France. Yet despite their satanic power for evil, these swarming infusoria surrender and die in heat; but the stronger survive unless extermination is done with accurate knowledge and control of temperatures.

The thermometer and its associate devices are the sleuths without which the safeguarding of milk could not be accomplished. You give your child milk with his breakfast, secure in your faith that in some way it has been freed from all deadly elements. Yet if the heat failed one degree in process of pasteurization the germs might still live; if the temperature went a little too high and cooked the milk, you might wonder what caused your boy's indigestion. So the health of millions of people who drink milk every day depends on the infallibility of indicating, recording and controlling instruments. One dairy uses 120 Tycos instruments. They write the story on a chart even as they open and close the steam valves.

AT your table you serve canned foods with complete equanimity, assuming that back out of sight some one with uncanny science has removed all potential poisons. You give scarcely a thought to the long years of research and invention that made possible these foods. You have no idea, for instance, how long it took the heat to penetrate the center of the can of pork and beans you had for luncheon. The Tycos recording thermometer alone can answer.

If these instruments had done no other service to the world than to make possible preserved foods, the Taylor Instrument Companies would feel that a mighty mission had been achieved.

Thermometers are now universal in homes while hygrometers are coming into use to maintain proper moisture. Lack of humidity indoors causes catarrh, colds, and other mucous diseases. Furthermore, with the proper percentage of moisture the saving of coal in the home may reach even 25 per cent. of the heating cost.

And then there is an indefinite field for housewives' special temperature instruments, adapted for canning, baking, jelly making, deep-fat frying, fireless cooking, and so on.

And when Bobby or Sally take to their beds with a violent pain in their little insides, a Tycos fever thermometer is called on to express an opinion. This instrument is really the compass of the medical profession—without which the doctor in many cases would be no wiser than the Indian medicine man.

Realizing the great responsibility resting upon it, the Taylor Instrument Companies go to the utmost extremes in making fever thermometers register correctly to the fraction of a degree.

So everywhere you find Tycos devices which speak for the Taylor Instrument Companies of Rochester, and this Institution asks no greater honor than to stand synonymous with *Service* done for the world.

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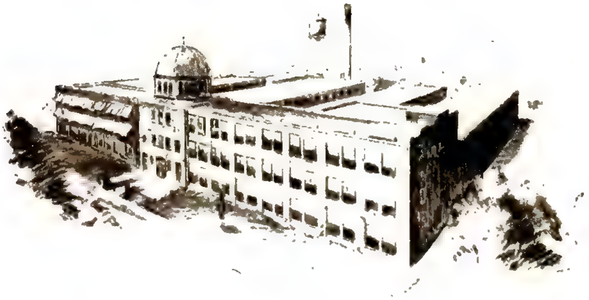

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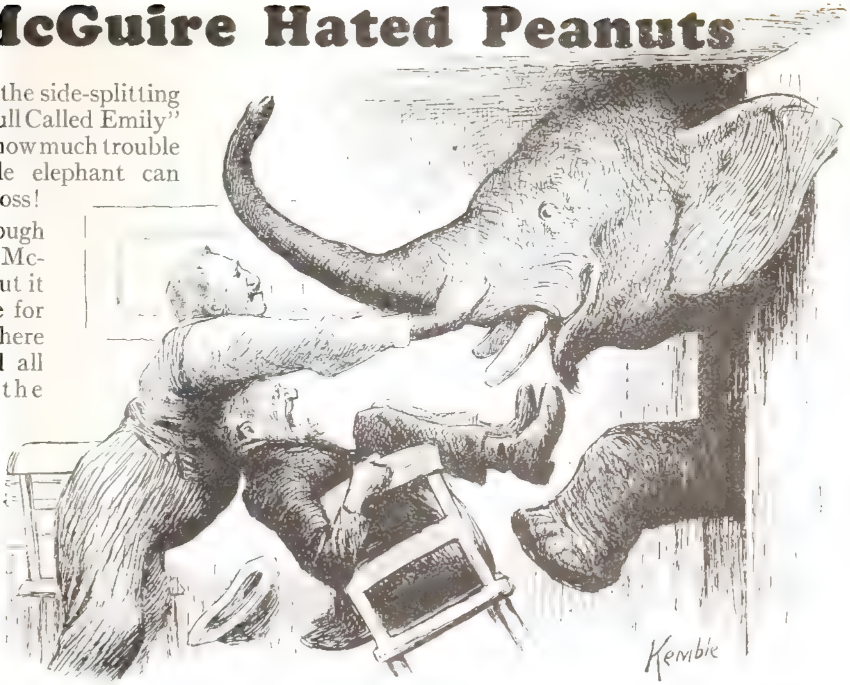

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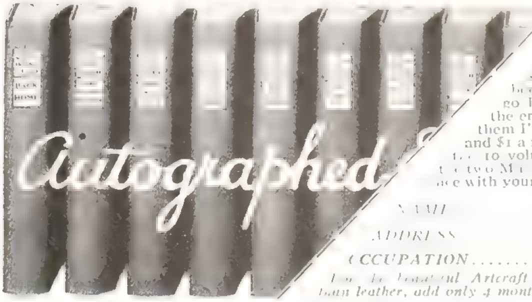

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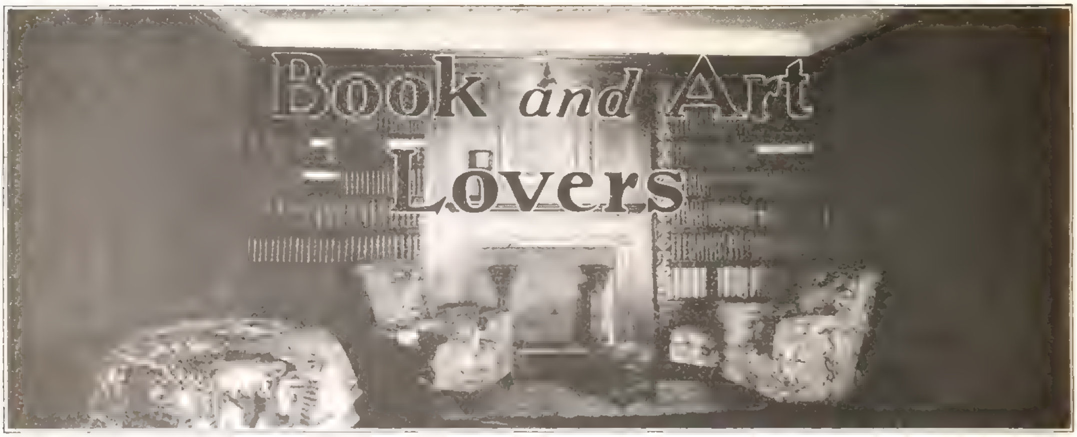

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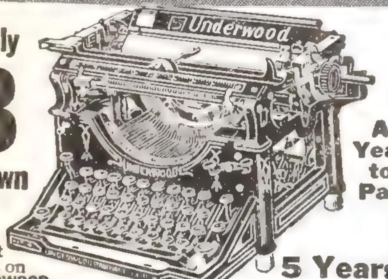

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New writer wins $1000 prize

THE $1000 prize offered by the Mission Film Corporation for the best screen story based on the title, "The Sunshine of Paradise Alley," has just been awarded to Otto E. A. Schmidt, of San Francisco.

Mr. Schmidt's story was chosen because of its high rating in dramatic strength, entertainment value and picturable action—a tribute to the character of the training he received from the Palmer Institute of Authorship.

Scores of other students of the Palmer Institute are also selling short stories, novels, plays, special articles and photoplays.

The list includes Anita Pettibone, whose novel, "The Bitter Country," was recently published by Doubleday, Page & Co.; Phyllis Cumberland, who sold "Tangled Lives" to Thomas H. Ince; Miss Bernadine King, who wrote "What Did the Bishop Say?"; John M. Byers, who sold his first play to a New York producer; Charles Shepherd, who wrote "The Ways of Ah Sin"; Tadema Bussiere, whose play, "The Open Gate," was given its premiere at the Morosco Theatre, Los Angeles, in October, 1924, and is soon to be taken to New York; Jane Hurrle, who wrote "Robes of Redemption"; Paul Schofield, who produced "Through the Dark," and Miss Winifred Kimball, who won the $10,000 prize in the scenario contest conducted by the *Chicago Daily News;* and Mrs. Ada Jack Carver Snell, the Louisiana school teacher who won the $1250 first prize in the Short Story Contest conducted by *Harper's Magazine* in 1924.

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Golden Ways To Golden Places

The Lure of Wide Waters and Strange Lands

THE spirit of Pierre Loti, of Lafcadio Hearn, of Conrad and McFee has permeated America to a degree that rather astonishes the Old World. Americans want wider perspectives than their Main Streets, or even their cosmopolitan life in great cities. They want to sail the seas and see the seven worlds and its seven wonders. At this time of the year this feeling rises to flood-tide.

And what is more natural? America's ancestry is almost uniformly an adventurous, traveling stock. The lure of the wide waters and strange lands was upon the parents, or grandparents of practically every one of us in days gone by. Once it surged across the Atlantic to these shores; then it surged across the inland plains of America.

Now it's new rhythm of movement is back to the old worlds; across the oceans into every corner of the world. Almost all the main tourist routes and centers of the globe have become Americanized, so great is the urge for travel, so numerous have been the Americans traveling hither and thither, with everywhere extensive efforts to cater to them.

Perhaps you have wondered why you find yourself longing as never before to travel abroad—and at this time of year most especially. Not only is the restless voyaging spirit of your ancestry speaking in you, but, without realizing it, you are also deeply moved by two or three other great forces. First, the marvelous world communication systems which have advertised the rest of the world to you. You have seen hundreds of photographs, articles, novels, moving pictures, radio, cablegrams and much beautifully illustrated advertising about many other countries. Even the war served to focus attention on foreign lands as never before. Your parents and grandparents saw scarcely one-hundredth part of such picture and detail about other countries. Second, you have, perhaps, never traveled much. America—especially during the war years—was rather restricted in travel opportunity. Third, you have, perhaps, more leisure and more savings; your opportunity to travel has arrived.

Your great interest today is in details and plans for a trip—even if it is but a short one, on a restricted budget. Perhaps you are just at this moment in the "chrysalis stage" of travel; you are just awakening to the idea that you really could make a delightful trip, even with the small sum you could afford to spend. Perhaps you are realizing that the long-cherished opportunity is really now open to you; that there is after all no reason why you shouldn't go. Never, it is true, has travel been faster, more comfortable and relatively so cheap; and never have better accommodations or wider choices and travel facilities been open to you.

Begin now to work out the details, and then by careful planning you will be able to get more out of a trip; see more, get better value for your expenditure. It is the people who rush abroad suddenly without planning who usually experience disappointments, unexpected expense and other vexations. You can avoid these by utilizing the experience and knowledge of seasoned travelers. It is surprising how smoothly, how inexpensively and satisfactorily one may travel if one wisely uses existing knowledge as guidance.

The true delight in traveling is to be as free as possible from the petty annoyances of travel; of mis-planning, regrets and the sense of having "missed out." No one wants to be an "innocent abroad"; Mark Twain has limned this comic character too vividly to miss. Pierre Loti, perhaps, approximated the ideal traveler's spirit, in succeeding in immersing himself completely in the atmosphere and native flavor of whatever place he happened to be in. He was as much at home at a Burmese Village dance as with the silent, stolid Mongols, or the rough sailors rounding the Horn. He saw into their hearts, understood their outlook on life, even though he could not speak their language. Yet he had no monopoly on the true spirit of travel. He was not, like some travelers, spending most of his time on the minor details of travel.

First of all, to attain the ideal trip, see well to your passport before you go. Eugene Bullard, the negro character whom Will Irwin tells about, got in the Foreign Legion without a passport, and, as he put it, "eased" himself through the strictly watched Austrian border. But *you* can't. You must appear in person at the passport agency in the custom house in New York, Chicago, Seattle, New Orleans, or before the Clerk of any United States District Court, or State Court authorized by law to naturalize aliens. A notary will *not* do. You will need to take with you (1) documentary proof of citizenship (birth certificate, or affidavit of relative); (2) an identifying witness; (3) two passport photos; (4) fees—$10 for the passport.

(Continued on page 36)

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The Lure of Wide Waters and Strange Lands

(*Continued from page 31*)

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Knowledge of the cost of visas is necessary if you are traveling on a close budget. We strongly urge that you plan your travel budget well in advance of your trip, so that you may be able to know what you can and can not do in the limited time or purse available to you.

Put down on paper the sum you have to spend; subtract from it your passage cost, and then put down the countries you would like to visit and the time you would have to spend in each. You will then quickly see what is possible and what impossible, and then will come your work of decision and figuring. You will have to decide between a longer stay in a few countries or quick visits to more countries. You can choose between the beaten paths of travel or the less obvious places—usually also less expensive. You can decide in advance for which countries you desire visas, and avoid paying for visas to countries you will later find you have no time to visit.

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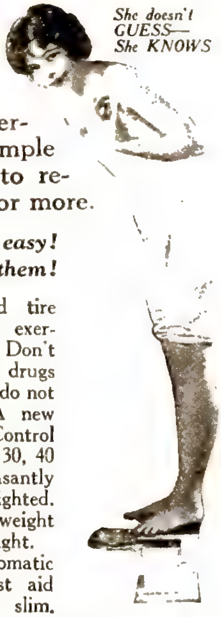
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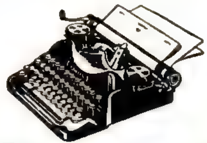

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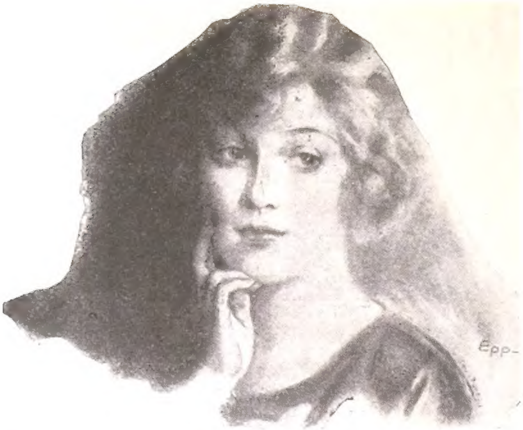

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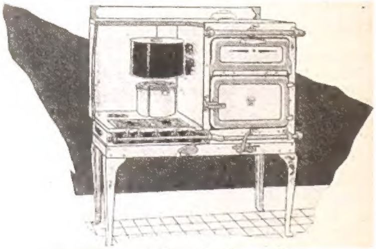

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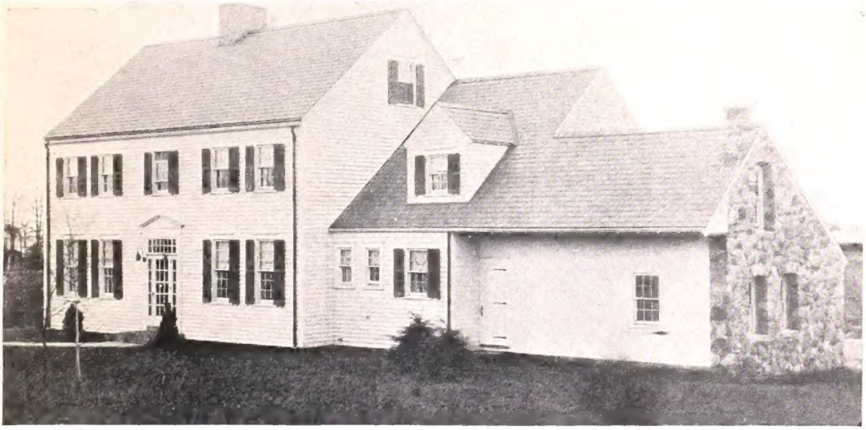

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